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"J WILL,"

AND

OTHER STORIES.

BY "MAY."



NEW-YORK:

P. S. WYNKOOP & SON, 108 FULTON STREET.

—
1868.

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I.

By and By.

THE winter was over and gone, the time of the singing of birds had come, and the earth was clad in the fresh beauty of spring-time. The people who had been shut up in the city while the grass had been springing up, and the trees budding, and the blossoms blowing, began to long for a breath of pure country air, and for a sight of the green fields once more. So it came to pass that the teachers of a certain Sunday-school in the town of M—— resolved upon giving their scholars and themselves a treat in the shape of a ride out of sight of brick walls and dusty streets to the shore of a lake not many miles away. The hours that must pass before the coming of the appointed

day seemed very long to the many eager, waiting children, who were by turns watching the clouds and winds without, and the preparation of cakes and white dresses within. But the eventful morning dawned at last. No one was behind time on the occasion, no one looked ill-natured, no one found fault; happiness was the order of the day.

It was a merry company that set out for the lake, and in all the crowd none were merrier than Maggie Meade and her brother Freddie. To them, as to all the rest, the ride seemed only too short, the lake with its rippling waves enchanting, the grove near by a paradise of beauty, the hours too swift in their rapid flight. But, as the proverb goes, "Time and tide wait for no man;" and while mirth and gladness were still at their height, the shadows began to lengthen on the grass, and the older people decided that it would be best to return home. So the signal was given, and from all parts of the grove the children hurried to obey it.

"Come, Maggie," called her teacher, as she started with the rest of the class, and left Maggie still gathering wild flowers and answering:

"Yes, ma'am—in a minute."

"Come, sister," pleaded Freddie; "they will all go and leave us."

"Oh! no, they won't," was the reply, "there's no particular hurry. I'll go by and by."

So Freddie stood and patiently waited for one minute, two, three, four, ten, twenty, thirty minutes, not knowing that while he waited the heavily-laden stages were already "homeward bound," and not one of all his friends had missed either himself or his sister. But at length he appeared to have reached the conclusion that forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, although he only said quietly:

"Maggie, don't you know what was in the hymn we learned last Sabbath?

'The clock is ticking, ticking,
Ticking the moments away.
The minutes make up the hours,
And the hours make up the day.'

This address aroused Maggie at last.

"Why, Freddie, where are they all gone? Come quick, let's hurry."

But there was no need of hurrying then; the time for that had passed. Scholars and teachers had

alike vanished from sight ; the hum of merry voices had ceased ; all around was quiet, save the twitter of the birds as they sought their leafy homes, and the unbroken murmur of the waves that washed the shore.

"Maggie," said Freddie solemnly, "we shall just have to lie down and die, and let the robins cover us with leaves."

"Oh! no, we shall not do any such thing," Maggie replied ; "you know we could live on acorns rather than do that ; there are plenty of them here. Besides, I found a wild strawberry to-day ; may be there are more."

So Freddie was comforted ; and soon, after a little coaxing from his sister, lay down to sleep. As for Maggie, she strained her eyes for hours watching for some late traveler who might be going in the direction of her own home. But all her watching was in vain, and at last she, too, yielded to the power of slumber. When she awoke, the moon was shining brightly in the west, and her father was calling, from no great distance, "Children, children, where are you?"

It is easy to imagine the glad meeting that fol-

lowed, and the happiness of the mother when, a couple of hours afterward, she welcomed her lost ones at home. Yet she could not help looking grave when Maggie confessed that her own disobedience had been the cause of the sorrow which had been brought upon her parents and herself. "Although," thought Mrs. Meade, "I do hope this will prove a lesson to Maggie, and that she will learn from it to overcome her habit of putting off every thing that she has to do until 'by and by.'"

But do you know what the word "habit" means? It signifies, in the French language, something that we wear, as a dress or a coat; and so it comes to mean, in our tongue, something which we are accustomed to do, something which we do so often that we make a continual practice of it, and keep it always with us, as we do the clothing on our bodies. Well, this habit of Maggie's—the habit of procrastination, of putting off—of saying, whenever she had any thing to do, "I will wait a little while," or, "I will do it pretty soon"—fitted very tightly indeed, so tightly that it seemed almost impossible for her to take it off. Her mother had talked to her about it until she had grown weary of doing so; her

teachers had coaxed, and threatened, and warned; her father had promised her beautiful gifts if she would only learn to be prompt, to do every thing at the right time and in the right place; but all in vain. Now, when at last she had been brought to see for herself the error of her way, she really resolved upon doing better; but alas! her resolution, because made in her own strength, was broken again and again, until, finally, two years after the time of which we have been speaking, her punishment came in a way which she little expected, but never afterward forgot. The last day of the term had come. The pupils of Miss Linden's school, the one which Maggie attended, had taken a final review of the studies of the year, had played their farewell game of "hide-and-seek," and had gathered in holiday attire to exhibit to their parents and friends the progress which had been made during the last twelve months, as well as to receive in their presence the various premiums for scholarship and good behavior. One after another stepped up to the principal's desk and had conferred upon them the prize for this or that merit or virtue, until Mary Greenwell triumphantly bore to her seat a reward

for promptness, and her companions began to whisper among themselves, "That is all," and the favored ones looked, if possible, more delighted, and the disappointed ones more sad, at the thought that now the hopes and fears of the year were realized, and the crisis was passed at length. But they were all mistaken. Suddenly Miss Linden arose, and said: "There still remains one reward to be given. The prize for tardiness will now be conferred upon Miss Maggie Meade, she having succeeded in being late at school nearly every day this year." What a tittering there was among the other scholars! and how all the mammas but poor Mrs. Meade opened their eyes and smiled, and nodded, and whispered, "Did you ever!" "Poor child!" etc., etc., as Maggie, blushing and hesitating, stepped up to the desk and received—what do you think? a sheet of note-paper containing just four lines of writing. Would you like to know what were the words written upon it? They were these:

"Whene'er a duty waits for thee,
With a cheerful courage view it;
Nor idly stand and wish it done,
But go at once and do it."

Of course, Maggie was greatly mortified. The disgrace of being thus publicly reprov'd seemed almost cruel. But when, weeping and ashamed, she had, in the solitude of her own home, poured out all her grief into the sympathizing ear of her mother, the only reply she received was this :

“ My dear child, I am very sorry ; but you have brought it all upon yourself. Only remember how many times you have been reasoned with, and entreated, and have promised to do better, but still remained careless and forgetful, and I think you will confess how much you needed this rebuke. I hope, indeed, it will be the last of the kind that you will ever require. Will you not now—not to-night or to-morrow, nor the next day—but now, begin to perform all your duties at the proper time for them, and cease entirely this habit of waiting until by and by ? Think how dangerous it is ; for, if you keep on putting off every day the little things which you have to do, I very much fear that you will neglect the great duty of life—that of preparing to meet your God. The day of death may be near ; we know not how soon it will come ; and if it should find you unprepared, it may then be too late to gain

an entrance into heaven. Like the foolish virgins in the parable, you may find that the door is shut. 'Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Now is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation.' "





II.

Wishing and Doing.



CARRIE GREY and Jennie Melville had been friends as long as they could remember. Their fathers' homes were near each other, and there were no other neighbors within half a mile; so it was not strange that the little girls had been thrown very much into one another's society.

As soon as they were old enough, they had begun to attend the district school. It was such an one as nearly every country hamlet in our land possesses, and the long walks to and fro were always taken in company. Sometimes they were attended for a part of the distance by one or another of their school-mates, and sometimes they chatted and laughed all the way, hearing no one's voice but their own.

However, on a certain day, about the middle of the winter in which they were both ten years old, they were joined on their return home by Anna Morris, who happened to be going in the same direction in order to visit a friend. At first, the talk of the three girls was about their studies, which they liked or disliked, and how far they would be able to advance before the close of the term. But before long, leaving the subject of study, they began to make various remarks concerning their companions, discussing this one's dress, and the other's character, and another's standing in her class.

At length Jennie said: "I wonder what has become of Hattie Murphy? She hasn't been to school for a month. I do not believe I have even seen her since the cold weather commenced."

"Well, I can put an end to your wondering," replied Anna Morris; "for ma was down to Mrs. Murphy's last evening, to see about having some sewing done, and Mrs. Murphy told her that she had not been able to send Hattie to school this winter on account of having no cloak thick enough for her to wear. Pa says poor people are so apt to be deceitful. Of course, we don't know, and it isn't right to

judge; but I'll have to say 'good-by'—this is my road."

So saying, Anna turned off in another direction, leaving the two friends to pursue their way alone. Carrie was the first to speak.

"Jennie," said she, "I don't believe Mrs. Murphy would tell a story; do you?"

"Oh! no, indeed. My mother says she has known her for twenty years, and she would trust her with anything—why, she is as honest as the day is long! So, it must be that Hattie has no cloak. Dear me, how sorry I am for her! I wish she had twenty. But, then, I can not buy her any, and my mother says she has enough to do to see that we have every thing that we want, without troubling herself about other folks' children. Poor Hattie! I wish she could come to school."

Of course, Jennie imagined that she was sincere in every word she uttered. She *was* sorry for Hattie, and she did wish her to have a cloak; but she was not sorry enough to put herself to any more trouble on Hattie's account than to utter a few exclamations of pity, and it never occurred to her that her wish might be fulfilled if she was only willing

to part with one of the many cloaks and shawls with which her wardrobe was stored. With Carrie the case was different. She had expressed so little sympathy for her friend that Jennie even wondered at her indifference. But if she said little, it was because she was thinking a great deal. Her father, although in comfortable circumstances, was not so wealthy as Mr. Melville; and, though he took care that his family should have all their wants supplied, yet he had never thought it right to expend money upon articles which were wholly unnecessary. So it happened that Carrie had just two cloaks—one new and the other old. When she heard of Hattie's need, she immediately began to consider whether it would be possible for her to do without one of these, in order to contribute to her friend's comfort. At first she was disposed to answer to the question thus presented to her mind, "No, I need all that I have myself." But when she had said "good afternoon" to Jennie, and was walking alone up the garden-path, there came to her memory a verse she had once learned in Sunday-school: "Let him that hath two coats impart to him that hath none," and that settled her decision.

Carrie went straight to her mother's room, and asked permission to give away the cloak she then wore. Mrs. Grey at first wondered at such a request; but after inquiring the reason why it was made, she readily gave consent to her daughter's plan. She was willing that her child should learn to deny herself in order to promote the happiness of others. Of course, Carrie had a walk to Mrs. Murphy's, and Hattie a glad surprise.

And though it was rather hard to bear, the next morning, the inquisitive gaze of her schoolmates, and to hear them whisper, "Carrie Grey has on her best cloak," (school-girls will sometimes do such rude things, you know,) yet Carrie felt happy in the consciousness that she had performed a deed of kindness, one which her heavenly Father might approve. And when the girls, crowding to the window, saw Hattie coming up the road, and recognized the warm garment which protected her from the cold, do you think that they loved or respected Carrie less than they had before? Jennie was loud in her expression of praise, for she had really wanted Hattie to have a cloak. The wishes of the two friends had

been the same; but one had acted in accordance with her desire, and the other had not.

Do you know what is meant in the Bible by the word goodness? It is only wishing well, and doing well—wanting to do good to others, and then trying to do them good. It was this fruit of the Spirit which Carrie bore. It was this that brought Jesus down to earth that he might seek and save the lost. Let us try to imitate his example; for “He went about doing good.”





III.

Two Days.



“**W**ELL, the vacation has come at last, and I am very glad of it. I mean to have a real good time all the week; it will be so very nice not to have any thing to do but play.”

These were the first thoughts that came into the mind of Minnie Hurlburt, as she awoke on a certain Monday morning in the month of May.

“I will make three or four new dresses for my doll, and read the story-book that father gave me the other day, and I mean to ask mother if I may invite Cousin Jennie to come and play tea with me this afternoon. Then, perhaps, to-morrow, Uncle James will give me that ride he promised so long ago. I guess he will if he only hears that we have vacation this week.”

Just here, Minnie's soliloquy was interrupted by the ringing of a bell—the signal for rising. But she did not obey the summons immediately; there was no need of hurrying that morning, she thought, and consequently postponed answering the call until so late that morning prayers and breakfast were both over before she was ready to go downstairs. The mortification of finding herself so tardy, together with a mild rebuke from her mother, destroyed Minnie's good-humor, so that the day was not commenced as pleasantly as she had anticipated. However, this bad beginning was soon forgotten in the pleasure of arranging, for the twentieth time, a magnificent doll-house—a birthday gift from her father. She had succeeded in getting it into a wonderful state of confusion, when her mother called from the next room, "Minnie, what are you doing?"

"Cleaning house," was the reply.

"Well, I want you to stop playing, and come and watch Willie while I write this letter."

"I don't want to; I want to play," Minnie answered crossly.

"Come here, my child, right away. I am aston-

ished that you should speak to me in such a manner."

Perhaps Mrs. Hurlburt would not have been so surprised at her daughter's conduct if she had known that the little girl, in planning how she should spend the day, had considered only her own amusement, and not at all how she could please any one else. People who think only of their own convenience, you know, are very apt to be disobliging and unkind if they are requested to do any thing for others.

Minnie was obliged to watch the baby; but she did it with so dark a frown on her face, and took so little pains to interest him, that he became troublesome, and compelled his mother to leave her letter unfinished in order to attend to him. Minnie returned to her play, but was unable to enjoy it. House-cleaning failing to attract any longer, she attempted dress-making. But this, for some reason, proved unusually difficult. The seams would be crooked, and the thread would knot, and the needle would prick her fingers, and finally, Minnie gave up in despair. Just as she did so, Mrs. Hurlburt entered the room, saying, "Come, my dear, you

have played long enough. I want you to hem this handkerchief for me."

"O mother! I don't want to work in vacation. Need I? I want to read my new book."

"Very well; you may gratify yourself or your mother, just as you think best. Of course, you will not expect me to grant you any favors while you are unwilling to do any thing to please me."

Minnie did not answer, but sullenly went for her book, in which she expected to find a great deal of amusement; but, strangely enough, she found both the stories and pictures uninteresting and dull. So far, she had not succeeded so well as she had expected in trying to enjoy herself; but still bent upon her own gratification, she ran to her mother with the request, "Ma, may I go for Cousin Jennie to come and spend the afternoon with me?"

"No, my child. You know that you have been a naughty girl this morning, and I shall punish you by denying you this pleasure."

Here Minnie gave up all thoughts of endeavoring to be happy, and made herself so unamiable through the rest of the day, that her mother was compelled to send her to her own room before dark, and to

forbid her to leave it until the next morning. She had a long evening all to herself; but then, as Mrs. Hurlburt said, "When people are ill-natured, the best thing for them is to be alone—it gives them an opportunity to repent of their wickedness." Besides that, Minnie had time enough to become thoroughly rested; and when morning came, she was up and dressed before any one else, looking and feeling as happy as a bird.

"Mother, shall I take Willie into the garden awhile" was her first question after breakfast; and she played with her little brother so kindly, and amused him so well, that he appeared rather sorry than glad when his nurse came to take him into the house again. After that, the little girl, having learned how much better it is to be useful than to be idle, offered to do for her mother the sewing about which she had been so disobliging the day before. When her work was done, there was still time to spend an hour with her book before dinner; and now (what do you think could have made the difference?) the stories were, as she expressed it, "perfectly splendid." Yet they were unaltered—Minnie only was changed. In the afternoon, just as she was

hesitating whether or not to resume the making of her doll's unfinished dress, her oldest brother, Eddy, rushed into the room, exclaiming, "Mother, Uncle James is at the gate, and he wants either Minnie or me to take a ride with him. He says it can be the one that you choose."

At first Minnie looked up eagerly, hoping that she would be the favored one; but then she remembered that her brother was quite as anxious to go as herself, and she said quietly: "Well, mother, let Eddy go; I have more to amuse me at home than he has."

Mrs. Hurlburt looked pleased to see her daughter so generous, and Eddy, without waiting for further discussion, ran off to the carriage. Minnie lost her long-anticipated ride, but she took a delightful walk with her mother, which was a pleasure second only to the one she had sacrificed.

On their return, Mrs. Hurlburt asked, "Minnie, are you not happier now than you were yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes, ma'am," was the reply.

"Well, my dear, I think I can tell you the reason why. Yesterday you tried to please yourself only,

even though you grieved some one else ; to-day you have been willing to deny yourself in order to gratify others. We are quite sure to be happy as long as we obey the Golden Rule — ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’ ”





IV.

What Makes a Gentleman?

WILLIE LEE is a boy who knows how to behave himself. He has understood, ever since he has been able to understand any thing, the difference between politeness and rudeness; and, what is more, he can, when he chooses, act in every respect like a gentleman. Consequently it is not strange that when Mrs. Brown, or Mrs. Smith, or any other of Mrs. Lee's acquaintances "drop in" to make her an afternoon call, and happen to find Willie in the parlor, they usually form a very good opinion of his manners, and frequently go away saying, "What a polite boy Willie is! Why, he is a perfect little gentleman!"

But could these same persons observe Willie's behavior at some time when no company is present, probably their remarks would be of a different character.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Willie one day not very long ago, "father's going to take me out sleigh-riding!" So saying, he rushed into the sitting-room and began to inquire loudly for his cap and overcoat, at the same time making sundry evolutions around the room, and managing to upset during the operation two or three chairs, beside his sister's work-basket.

"Gently, Willie," said his mother. "There! you have waked the baby already."

"I can't help it," rejoined Willie, very indifferently, as though he did not care at all whether he could help it or not.

Indeed, he showed very plainly that he was far from being sorry for the mischief he had done; for the general bustle which he had contrived to create was not only continued, but increased.

"Willie, do be careful!" "Willie, you must not be so rude!" "Willie, please be quiet!" were the exclamations that came from all parts of the room.

One would have thought that "Willie" would have grown tired of hearing his name repeated so often. Perhaps he did; for it was not long before he ran out into the hall, calling at the top of his voice:

"Sarah! come here quick! I want my coat!"

"Well, if you expect me to get it for you, you can just ask more politely, so you can," was the rejoinder that came from the foot of the stairs.

It would be hardly safe to repeat the reply which followed—some little boy might be foolish enough to imitate it; but it was so poorly calculated to restore Sarah's good-humor that Willie was left to find his coat as best he could alone.

He had just discovered it lying under a sofa, with his cap in one of the pockets—he had thrown it there upon his return from school—when the sound of sleigh-bells was heard approaching the door.

"O dear!" he exclaimed, "there comes father, and I'm not ready. Mother, help me put this on, won't you?"

"Mother" lent her assistance, and the slamming of doors which followed proved that it was Willie and no one else who was leaving the house. Mrs. Lee uttered a sigh of relief, and sat down; "Grand-

pa Harris" resumed his spectacles and his reading, and all was quiet for two hours. At the end of that time Willie returned, and with him, what was not so welcome, the noise.

"Willie," said his grandfather after supper, when he and the little boy had been left alone together, "you have not been a very good soldier to-day. You have been wounding a number of your friends without cause."

"How is that, sir?" asked Willie, (he never spoke disrespectfully to his grandfather.)

"Don't you remember my saying the other day that all who live in the world are soldiers, fighting together the battle of life? Every family is a company in a great army. Now, what would you think of a soldier in camp who should suddenly rise, without any reason for so doing, and begin to attack the members of his own company; drawing his sword over one, sticking his bayonet into another, and firing at a third? You would say that the man was beside himself. Yet this is exactly what you have been doing all day. Why, just think how many persons' feelings you have injured only this afternoon. First, you displeased your mother when you

awoke the baby so rudely ; then you hindered your sister with her work, and stopped your grandfather's reading ; after that, you offended Sarah by speaking to her so unkindly ; and at the tea-table you made your little sister very uncomfortable by laughing at a slight mistake she made. Ah ! my boy, if you mean to be a gentleman when you grow up, you must begin by being gentle now. I remember, when I was a boy" — Willie's eyes brightened — "there were two boys attending the same school that I did, who were unlike in every respect. One of them was from the country—a farmer's son. His clothes were of plain homespun, his boots coarse and heavy, and his short, bushy hair always stood out straight from his head. He knew nothing about the customs of what is termed polite society ; yet, if the most important thing in the character of a gentleman is, as I lately read, 'a respect for the feelings of others,' he was truly a gentleman. He never lost an opportunity of doing any one a kindness, and he was careful not to displease even the smallest child in the school. Of course, Mike, as we called him, was a general favorite and had plenty of friends. The other boy, Alfred, had been brought

up among the refinements of city life. He knew how to bow politely, and to dance gracefully, and to speak pleasant, smooth-sounding words. His clothing was always in the newest style, and his toilet made with the greatest care. Those who had seen him only a few times thought him a model of politeness. Yet a more selfish, disobliging boy it would be hard to find. He cared nothing for the wishes of others so long as he could please himself, and did whatever his fancy led him to do, even though it were at the expense of offending those whom he called his friends. I learned from observing those two boys that true politeness consists not in outward manners, but in real kindness of heart—in the desire and effort to make others happy. Willie, my boy, you must be more gentle."

Willie promised to try. It is to be hoped he will succeed. "The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness."





V.

An Evening Talk.



THE short winter day was over. The sun had gone down below the western hills, and "left the world to darkness." The wind moaned through the branches of the leafless trees, and by turns roared and whistled in the chimney. It was dreary without, but within the fire was brightly glowing in the grate, and a group of happy faces surrounded it, where a mother had gathered her little ones around her to spend the twilight hour in quiet talk. The various pleasures of the day were recounted. Charles told what "a splendid time" he had had skating, and how he had "beaten" all the boys in a race on the ice; Jennie repeated the praises Aunt Fanny had bestowed on her favorite doll; Ella related an amusing story she

had read, and Jemmie, the youngest, gave an account of a battle which had occurred between his dog Carlo and his sister's kitten.

The mother listened kindly and attentively to all these narratives, and then herself began to speak upon more serious subjects.

It was Saturday evening; and, as it was her custom to do at the close of every week, she requested each of her children to repeat the lesson he was to recite on the morrow. This they enjoyed doing; for they had thoroughly committed to memory their hymns and verses, and had only to open their mouths and let the words fall from their lips. But they were especially glad when "mother" lifted the catechism from the table near her, and began to find the place by the light of the fire. They were sure that she would have something to tell them which would make the lesson plainer and more interesting; and they were not disappointed.

The subject that evening was Thankfulness, and the first question, which was addressed to Charles, was this: "Since we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace through Christ, why must we still do good works?"

The answer came promptly: "Because that Christ, having redeemed and delivered us, also renews us." The others were then questioned in turn, and again Charles was asked, "Why does Christ renew us by the Holy Spirit after his own image?" and the answer came as quickly as before, "That so we may express our gratitude to God for his blessings."

Here the mother closed the book. "We will stop here," she said; "for I want to talk with you a little while about what you have recited.

"You know that there are many people in the world who imagine that their own good works will take them to heaven. You have heard of the heathen in far-off India, who run iron hooks into their bodies, perform painful journeys by rolling themselves over the ground, throw themselves beneath the wheels of the car of their god Juggernaut, and torment themselves in various ways, hoping that the sufferings which they undergo will secure their happiness hereafter. You have heard of the old Roman Catholic monks who shut themselves up in convent-cells, denied themselves food when they were hungry, and sleep when they were weary, repeated

prayers without number, and punished themselves for their sins by all the methods which they could invent, expecting thus to win the favor of God. And you, perhaps, have heard people, who ought to know better than these heathen devotees and Catholic monks, say, with apparent sincerity, 'Well, I try to do as well as I can, and I think that I will come out right at last.' But all these are very greatly mistaken. Nothing that they can do, either to torture themselves or to benefit others, will be of any account when they come to die; for the Bible, you know, says: 'By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' Yet, although heaven has been purchased for us, although salvation is freely offered to us, we can not, for this reason, live lives of wickedness, saying to ourselves that God is so merciful that we shall be safe in the end. Indeed, no true Christian would desire to do this. Having received so many blessings from the Father above, he would ever desire to please him by doing the things which he loves, and avoiding sin, which he hates. But he will not try to do good in order by so doing to win for himself a home in heaven; for that is already his, purchased

by the price paid on Calvary. I remember once reading a story which will show you what I mean by this.

“Many years ago, there lived in a distant Eastern city a little boy named Ozair. His home was a palace, whose richly sculptured walls, long and elegant galleries, costly furniture, and beautiful gardens were the pride of its owner, the king of the country. Golden fountains glittered in the marble courts, splendid ornaments were everywhere scattered in profusion, the fragrance of many perfumes filled the air, and singing-birds and sweet-toned instruments poured forth continual streams of enchanting melody. But amid all this magnificence Ozair was unhappy. To him the palace was a prison, the armed men who guarded it were jailers, his silken robes were galling fetters; for the boy was a slave. He was young; but it seemed to him that ages had gone by since he had last received a mother’s kiss or seen a father’s smile—since the bright spring morning when his parents, in their lonely mountain hut, had been seized, and carried he knew not whither by the soldiers of the king, and he, their only child, had been taken, a captive, to the dwelling of the monarch, that he

might amuse him by his presence and delight him by his beauty. Since then years had passed; but the boy still longed for his mountain-home, for a sight of the trees beneath which he had once played, of the rocks on which he had once climbed, of the rippling stream which had run by his father's door. If he could only again be free, he thought, he would ask for nothing beside. But it was in vain, he knew, to wish for liberty; he must remain an unwilling inhabitant of a palace, a slave in the home of a prince. But after some time had elapsed, another and more powerful ruler, from a far-off land, came on a visit to the king. He came in great state, attended by many followers, and bringing costly presents, the products of the country which he governed. He remained a number of weeks, winning, by his gentleness and courteousness, the respect and love of all who approached him. One morning, as the two kings were conversing together, the guest said to his friend: 'You have a child among your servants whom I should like to have for my own. If you will sell him, I will give you whatever price you may ask. I mean the boy Ozair.' The monarch, replying that he valued the young captive highly,

named a very large sum as the price he would demand. This the other did not scruple to pay; so Ozair was sold. 'Now,' said his new owner, 'let the child be brought.' The boy came at the summons, expecting to be required to perform some office of duty for his late master; but what was his surprise to be addressed in such words as these: 'Ozair, I have bought you from your lord the king. You are no longer to be a slave, but are to be my son. I will take you to my home, bring you up with my own children, and educate you as a prince.' The child could do nothing but weep tears of joy and gratitude. He believed every word that he had heard; he knew that the king was too good and too kind to deceive him, but he could hardly realize that he, the orphan captive, had become the son of a mighty king. Yet so it was. 'My father,' he exclaimed, 'I can do nothing but love thee; that will I do all the days of my life.' Before a great while, the monarch, taking with him his newly-adopted son, set out upon his return. The journey was long and difficult. The road lay sometimes across a pathless desert, sometimes through gloomy forests, the abodes of savage beasts. But Ozair never complained either of the

tediousness or of the perils of the way ; for he was going to his father's house, and the thought filled him with happiness continually. Besides, the kind parent to whose home he was traveling was with him as he journeyed thither, and, trusting to his care and protection, he felt that he was safe. At length they reached the city where the king abode, the capital of the country. Ozair was immediately conducted to the palace, which was far more magnificent than the one in which his boyhood had been passed. Its splendor might be imagined, but never described. As the child beheld it, he was filled with amazement, and cried out, 'How can I ever be thankful enough to him who has brought me to such a home as this?' And the boy's after-life proved that his words were sincere. No task was too difficult for him to undertake, no danger too great for him to encounter, no burden too heavy for him to bear, if only he could, in some way, express his gratitude to the one who had redeemed him from bondage, and made him his son and heir. If the king was sick, Ozair watched over him ; if weary, he entertained him with reading or music ; if troubled with the affairs of the realm, he assisted him as much as possible in trans-

acting his business. Once, when his brothers had conspired to take their father's life and to seize upon the throne, Ozair, discovering their plan, revealed it to the king, and thus prevented its execution.

"But it would take too long a time to tell you of all the ways in which this boy proved his thankfulness. I can only say that he constantly showed it throughout his whole life. He endeavored always to please the king by every means in his power; and he did so, not that he might secure the palace as his own—it was already his; not that he might be declared heir to the throne—he knew that if he lived he should some day ascend it. He tried only to manifest his love.

"And in this," the mother continued, "the heir to an earthly crown was not unlike those who have been adopted into the family of the great Father in heaven. They endeavor, not to win his love, but only to thank him for it; not to assure themselves of a home above, but to become worthy of it; not to secure their own freedom from the bondage of sin, for they have been redeemed with a price more precious than silver and gold, but only to live as children of God; and living thus, they shall one day

become 'kings and priests' unto the Lord in the 'house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'"

Just then the shutting of the gate was heard, in the dusky light a tall form was seen coming up the gravel walk, and the children, shouting, "Papa has come!" ran to meet him at the door.





VI.

The Girl who could not be Trusted.

It is the easiest thing in the world for some people to make a promise. They will say Yes or No to any thing that may be asked of them, sometimes knowing what they say, but often without knowing; sometimes intending to keep their word, and sometimes without thinking or caring any thing about it. Such persons are usually very polite and pleasant, full of smiles and soft words, and, if one could only rely upon them, they would be very obliging—for, you know, they will promise any thing. But there is just the difficulty; for these easy-tempered, good-natured people who never can bear to say No are oftentimes so very easy-tempered that they are able to utter a falsehood as

easily as a truth, and feel no disturbance of conscience whatever.

Bessie Hill's character, it must be confessed, was such a one as has just been described. She was a child whom every one loved ; for she seemed to love every one, and she appeared so anxious to please, so unwilling to be disobliging, that one who had known her only a short time might have considered her disposition very nearly perfect. Yet, if Mr. A., her music-teacher, had been questioned as to what he knew of Bessie, he might have told how every week for a whole quarter she had repeatedly promised to practise for an hour each day, and how, every week in the quarter, she had failed to keep her word, until at length his patience would have been completely exhausted had not his little pupil renewed more earnestly than ever the assurance that she would really try to do better. Yet he knew that while he hoped for the best, his hope was doomed to be disappointed.

And Miss Ellers, who every Sabbath went to Sunday-school thinking, "How glad I will be if Bessie has learned her lesson, as she said she would do," and every Sabbath went away sorry because of Bes-

sie's broken promise; and Mrs. Banks, who day after day worried through one imperfect recitation after another in the constant expectation of an improvement which it seemed must come, it had been so often promised—both of these might have agreed with Mr. A. in saying that Bessie was certainly the most amiable of all their pupils, but, at the same time, the most unreliable. Bessie's mother, too, mourned over this fault of her child, and tried, but tried in vain, to help the little girl to overcome it. She would persist in promising to meet her school-mates at certain hours and places, and in then going home and forgetting all about her engagements, leaving her friends to wonder where Bessie Hill could be. And she would not give up her habit of running over to Aunt Hester's in the morning and saying, "Auntie, I will come and play with the baby this afternoon," when she knew very well that, when afternoon came, the baby would probably be left to amuse himself, while his little cousin across the street was occupied with some new toy or book, just as though she had made no promise at all. At last Bessie found out by experience what her friends had

so long been trying to teach her, that it was very important that she should learn to keep her word.

Among Bessie's companions was one whom she often visited, and whose home was at some distance from Mr. Hill's. The road over which it was necessary to pass in going from one house to the other was a lonely one, and Bessie had been often told that it was not safe for her to attempt to go back and forth alone. There was usually some one willing to accompany her, and she was too young to be without protection. So it happened that one pleasant Saturday morning her father said: "Come, Bessie, I am going to take a long ride to-day. If you would like to go and see Mary Brown, (for that was the little girl's name,) I will leave you there on my way, and stop for you on my return."

"Thank you, father," answered Bessie. "I would like it very much." So the arrangement was made. "Now, you will be sure to wait for me this afternoon, will you not?" said the gentleman to his daughter as he left her at Mr. Brown's door. "Oh! yes, father, I will wait, of course," Bessie replied, and for once she really intended to keep her word. But when afternoon came, and with it no appearance

of her father, Bessie began to grow impatient. She suddenly remembered an arithmetic lesson which she had promised to learn for the next Monday, and which she had not before thought of, and she felt slightly uneasy in regard to the verse which she had assured Miss Ellers she would be able to recite on the next day, and which now for the first time came to her recollection. You see her conscience was not quite dead after all, only it troubled her at the wrong time. However that may be, Bessie imagined that she had a sufficient excuse for not keeping the promise to her father, as by observing that she would be in danger of breaking two others made before it; so she said to Mary: "Mary, I don't believe father will be here till evening, and mother will be anxious about me, so I am going home. See, it is growing dark already." Neither Mary nor herself knew that the darkness was caused by the gathering storm, and not by the approach of night. So Bessie set out on her return, feeling, meanwhile, very guilty and unhappy. She had not gone more than half-way before the rain-drops began to fall. They came faster and faster until the single drops became torrents of water. Bessie took shelter

under a large tree, and looked about her in dismay. Above her all was blackness, around her the pouring rain. The branches over her head swayed to and fro in the wind until Bessie was afraid that they might fall and crush her, and the rain penetrated beneath them, and came and made a little pool at her feet. Bessie remembered the story of the flood which had once been sent to punish people for their wickedness, and she began to fear that the water around her would continue to rise gradually until she should be swallowed up in the waves, just like the transgressors who were drowned in the time of Noah. She was in the act of looking about her to see whether there might not be a board that she could get to float upon, as some were represented as doing in the picture in the large Bible at home, when suddenly the sky grew brighter, the clouds overhead began to break and move away, and before her, reaching from the glowing hills in the east higher and higher up along the brightening heavens shone, all the more beautiful for the darkness that had gone before, a rainbow. Bessie was comforted. "How foolish I was," she said to herself; "I might have known that there could not be another flood; for

God promised Noah that there never should be one again. I remember now that the rainbow was the sign of the promise." And as Bessie thought of the faithfulness of the great Father in keeping his word to his children, and of how far she had been from imitating his example, she began to cry. As she stood there under the tree, the very image of distress, troubled with mingled sorrow for her naughtiness and anxiety to reach her home, Dr. Burroughs came riding slowly along, his old gray horse looking almost as rueful as Bessie herself, and his gig bespattered with mud from top to bottom.

"What! little girl, out here in this storm? Crying, too! Well, I don't wonder. Jump in here by me, and I'll take you where you can get some dry clothes. Strange that your mother should let you be out when she saw the shower coming on." "She didn't let me," sobbed Bessie, "I promised father to wait for him at Mr. Brown's, and, instead of that, I started alone. I'm so sorry." "Yes, I should think you would be," said the doctor. He was a kind-hearted man, but not sparing of his words. "I guess you will remember to keep your promise the next time you make one. When people neglect to

keep their word, they generally get into trouble." And with this remark the doctor left Bessie to her own reflections, not speaking again till he came before her own home. There he put her down, saying: "Let me give you one piece of advice, little girl. Never make a promise unless you mean to keep it, and never break a promise after it is made." Bessie entered the house feeling very miserable and forlorn, but, it is to be hoped, a wiser and a better girl than when she had left it in the morning.

Reader, whoever you may be, whether boy or girl, if you would be happy and prosperous in this world; if you would enjoy the confidence of your friends—would win the favor of the God above, speak always the "truth in the love of it." Be so honest, so upright in your engagements that all who know you may be able to trust in your good faith, your fidelity to your word. Remember that "it is better not to vow than to vow and not perform," and that "the seat of faithfulness is in the heart where God's Holy Spirit dwells;" for "the fruit of the Spirit is faith."



VII.

A Word Left Out.



VERY boy and girl knows how short a day Saturday always is; how quickly the hours fly away, and how little time there is for any thing beside play. Lucy Brown understood this as thoroughly as any little girl could. She knew very well that, if she began in the morning by dressing dolls, or reading story-books, or playing games, somehow or another the sun was very likely to set, and bedtime to come before she had even thought of learning her Sunday-school lesson. Yet, no one would have supposed that Lucy had ever made this discovery; for she always acted as if she believed that the last day of the week would be, by some means, lengthened out twice as long as any other—as if, indeed, it could have no end. The par-

ticular Saturday of which we are speaking she had passed very much as many others before it. She had trimmed a walking-suit for the waxen Emma, and made a new bonnet for china Susie, and a white apron for the crying doll. She had played hide-and-seek with Charlie, and was just in the midst of an enchanting fairy tale, when, noticing that it was growing dark surprisingly early, she suddenly recollected her Sunday-school lesson. The fairy-book was laid aside, and her little pocket Bible easily found; for among Lucy's faults was not the one of being disorderly.

She had just taken her seat close by the window, and begun to study very earnestly, when Charlie entered the room.

Now, Charlie was not a bad boy, nor an ugly one, but he did love to tease his sister. Not that he delighted to give any one pain—he would have scorned to hurt even a fly; not that, in other respects, he was ungentlemanly, but then, it was *such* fun to see Lucy frown and to hear her say, “Now, don’t!” Charlie had yet to learn to obey the Saviour’s words, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

On this afternoon the spirit of mischief appeared to have taken possession of him. Walking to the window, as if for the purpose of raising the shade, he contrived to draw Lucy's net off her head.

"O Charlie!" said the little girl pettishly, "just see what you've done."

"I can't help it. You oughtn't to be in my way, then; let me move you a little." And suiting the action to the word, this polite young gentleman attempted to alter the position of his sister's chair.

"Charlie Brown, do keep still, won't you?"

"Oh! yes, I'll keep still," was the irritating reply, and, placing himself between the window and Lucy's book, Charlie remained quiet for the space of about one minute and a half. Lucy could bear the interruption no longer. "I do wish you would get out of my light; you know I want to study my lesson."

The only reply brought forth by this remark was, that Lucy's book was suddenly snatched away from her and carried across the room. The loud expressions of indignation which followed drew Mrs. Brown to the scene.

"Charlie! Lucy! what is the matter?"

"I was only trying to study, and Charlie annoys

me every way he can. I don't believe he likes me at all."

Charlie was sent to his own room in disgrace. As for Lucy, considering her brother entirely at fault, and herself very much injured and abused, she was quite surprised to find that her mother regarded her with evident displeasure.

"Come here, Lucy," said Mrs. Brown, after a pause, during which her little girl had been wondering what she had done that was so very wrong; "if you know your Sunday-school lesson, I will hear you recite it now. Where is it?"

"It is the twenty-second and twenty-third verses of the fifth chapter of Galatians."

"Very well; I have found it. You may commence."

Lucy began: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

"That is not quite correct. You have omitted a very important word—long-suffering. If you had noticed that one word, and thought about its meaning, you would have had no trouble with Charlie."

"Why, mother, I don't know how I could have

helped having trouble with him. He was so provoking."

"Yes, my dear. But suppose that, instead of being provoked, you had shown a little patience, a little forbearance; suppose that you had spoken pleasantly to him, instead of becoming fretted and angry, do you think he would have continued to annoy you? I know he would not. But even if he had done so, would it not still have been better to bear his teasing with long-suffering than to act as you did? You would, at least, have shown that your lesson had been of some use to you. I was reading this morning in the New Testament an account of something that happened while Jesus was on earth. He was on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified, and, coming to a village in Samaria, he sent messengers into it to announce that he would stop there, and to prepare for his arrival. But the people of the village, who hated all Jews, would not allow him to enter. The disciples, James and John, were so indignant at this treatment of their Master, that they wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume those who had acted so unkindly. But Jesus rebuked them, saying, that he had 'come not to destroy men's lives,

but to save them.' He had done these Samaritans no wrong, yet he bore their ill-treatment patiently. Ought not we, who are by no means perfect ourselves, to show forbearance toward one another?

"Our lives and all our blessings are continued to us only through the long-suffering of God; yet we are very ready to find fault with others who are not greater sinners than ourselves. If we really love one another, we shall try not to be so quickly angry at every little deed of unkindness or thoughtlessness. 'Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.' 'Charity suffereth long.'"





VIII.

A Discovery.



ROGER MORELY was, by far, the best scholar in Mr. Whitner's school. No one of his classmates could perform so rapidly or accurately the examples in the "Higher Arithmetic," or give so good a translation of the more difficult passages in "Caesar's Commentaries," or so correct an account of the principal events in ancient history as he. None of them had earned so many compliments from the writing-master, nor gained so many prizes for declamation, nor been so often commended for good deportment. In short, he had become quite an object of admiration, as well to himself as to his companions; for Roger was by no means unconscious of his superior scholarship,

and was fully aware of the importance to which it entitled him. It had not been without effect that Mr. Whitner had repeatedly pronounced him "a model worthy of imitation;" and that, at the quarterly examination, Squire Tupman had several times patted him on the head, saying, "I am pleased to hear so good an account of you, Roger;" and that he had more than once overheard his mother telling some of the neighbors "how steady and quiet her son was—quite unlike other boys; for he always spent his evenings at home, engaged in his studies, and never annoyed her with teasing or mischief-making, as his brother William had done ever since he was two years old."

Of course, it was not strange that Roger had come to consider all this praise as quite proper and natural, and had learned to expect it as the due reward for his exemplary conduct. But, one day, the feeling of satisfaction with which he usually regarded himself was suddenly destroyed.

It was a day in the month of December. The weather was just that sort of weather which makes the face of every one who ventures out of doors grow unnaturally rosy, and fills the minds of skaters

with anticipations of "glorious fun," and draws the garments of the poor very closely around their shivering forms, and sends suffering and want into many homes, where the last crust has been taken from the closet to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and the last ember smoking in the fireplace has died for want of company. But Roger set out for school, regardless of the cold, thinking how he would surprise Mr. Whitner and the boys when he told them that he had worked out an example which his classmates had been vainly trying to perform, and carrying his head with an air which seemed to say, "How far superior I am to every one around me!"

He went on in this way until he came in sight of the school-house. A group of boys were gathered around the door, watching the approach of every new-comer.

As Roger drew near, he overheard the remark, accompanied by a sneering laugh, "Oh! here comes the model scholar; see how straight he walks!" "No matter," said Roger to himself; but just as he had begun to think how he should have revenge for the idle word, his foot slipped on the icy pavement, and down he fell to the ground. Such a laugh as

arose from the group at the door! It was much harder to bear than the fall. Roger thought he was justified in being cross all day.

"Roger," said Willie Smith, at recess, "will you please help me a little with this Latin sentence? I puzzled over it last night for half an hour or more."

"Get your own Latin sentence," was the amiable reply; "I have as much as I can do to learn my own lessons, without troubling myself about other people's."

Willie turned away with a disappointed air, and Roger went to his seat whistling and feeling—happy and contented, do you suppose? Far from it; feeling just as miserable as it is possible for a boy to be.

For once, he was actually dissatisfied with himself. Yet, when the bell rang, he caught up his arithmetic with eagerness, and went to the recitation, thinking that the time to avenge himself had come. But when he began to explain the difficult problem, great was his mortification to find that the secret trouble in his mind had banished all other thoughts, and he was obliged to confess himself unable to perform the example. Roger would much rather have fallen upon the sidewalk a dozen times than thus to fall in

the estimation of his schoolmates, and in his own as well. But what was done could not be helped, he reasoned; and being determined to conceal his disappointment as much as possible, after school was dismissed he started for the skating-pond, according to an agreement made with his comrades the day before. But in some places the ice was rough, and in others there were wide cracks, and to Roger the rough parts seemed rougher, and the cracks wider than to any of his companions. Perhaps it was because he was cold, probably it was because that, not being on good terms with the other boys, they had left him to enjoy his own society, which, on this particular day, was not the pleasantest imaginable. But, whatever may have been the cause of so unusual an occurrence, Roger soon pulled off his skates and went home, having come to the conclusion that it was useless for him to endeavor to be happy when no one treated him with kindness or politeness. Yet, he could not have complained of the want of either when his sister Ella met him at the door, and offered to put away his hat and gloves.

"Get out of my way, will you? Don't keep me standing here in the cold."

Ella opened her blue eyes very wide indeed at the unexpected salutation, but said nothing. Her forbearance only irritated her brother the more, and he was just upon the point of saying something still more ungentlemanly than the previous remark, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he turned, with a genuine blush of shame, and rushed up-stairs to his own room.

He was thoroughly and utterly unhappy, at peace neither with himself nor with any one else. Roger threw himself upon a sofa, and actually cried himself to sleep. As he slept, he dreamed that he was at the foot of a high mountain, the sides of which were covered with groves of flowering trees. All around him were a multitude of men, women, and children; some of them disputing with their neighbors, some finding fault with their condition, others apparently enraged at their own misdoings, but all, undoubtedly, the victims of angry passion. Above them, on the slope of the mountain, might be seen another assembly, fewer in number and more orderly in appearance. All of this group were so evidently in a state of enjoyment, some of them conversing with their companions, others sitting quietly in the

shade of the overhanging branches of the trees, or seeking shelter from the heat beneath some overhanging rock, that Roger determined to join them. But upon reaching a gateway through which it was necessary to pass, he found it closed and locked, and upon it this inscription :

“This road to the Mountain of Peace doth lead :

Whoe’er would tread it must now give heed

To the words that are written hereon :

Seek peace with your God, with yourself, and with men,

Lest haply your striving be all in vain

To reach the mountain beyond.”

Roger was just beginning to consider how he should follow these directions, when suddenly he awoke. His dream had passed, as dreams do ; but the lesson it taught him remained.

Only those who have been reconciled to God through the Lord Jesus Christ can possess that “peace which passeth all understanding.” “The works of the flesh are anger, wrath, strife ; but the fruit of the Spirit is peace.”



IX.

Uncle Dennis and the Boys.

“**C**OME, boys, let's go and rest awhile. I think it's too warm to play; don't you?”

So said Henry Rivers to the friends who had come to spend Saturday afternoon with him.

“I do.” “Yes.” “A great deal.”

The three answers being given immediately and all together, Henry was assured that the party were of but one opinion, and accordingly led the way to the library, where, as he said, it was always cool. The others—Charles Harker, James Contrell, and Hubert Gray—followed. They entered rather unceremoniously, and were somewhat surprised at finding the room already occupied.

“Come in, boys, come in! Glad to see you. Sit

down and amuse yourselves just as if I were not here."

Uncle Dennis spoke so pleasantly that the boys easily regained their composure, and, seating themselves, began a lively conversation. They talked about this thing and that; about what they had seen and what they had heard; about what they had done, what they meant to do, and what they intended to be. The last topic engaged them longest. Perhaps you would like to hear what they wanted to make of themselves.

"I," said Hubert, "intend to be a sailor—a sea-captain, as my father is. I should like to travel around the world; to see the British Isles, and France, and Spain, and Italy; to double the Cape of Good Hope, and sail over the Indian Ocean; to see for myself how people drink tea in China, and whether our antipodes that Professor Dunton talks so much about are not really in danger of falling off the earth. When I had been long enough in the East, I would just cross the Pacific and come back again to the Western Continent. Then, perhaps, I would sail up toward the North Pole and find out what became of Sir John Franklin. After that, I

would come home to tell travelers' stories, and rest satisfied with my laurels. Wouldn't that be fine fun, boys? and would not you like to take passage in my vessel?"

"Yes," answered Charles, "I should be delighted to go with you; but the trouble is, that it would require too much time. For my part, I am determined to be rich. I intend to be a merchant-prince, and to make myself the owner of millions of money, and a great many houses and land. Then I will live in a palace, and have horses and carriages, and many servants. Of course, every body will respect my opinion, and bow to me most politely; and altogether I shall have a very pleasant time."

"Well," said James, "when you have made your fortune, I hope you will expend a part of it in purchasing me a fine, large library, for I hope to become a scholar. I should like to be able to understand a great many languages, in order to read the best books that have been written in them all; and perhaps some day I shall be James Contrell, LL.D., author of a number of learned treatises. But, Henry, in what direction do you mean to travel in this voyage of life?"

“Oh! I don’t know exactly; but I think it would be nice to be somebody *great*. I expect to do something or another that will make every one talk about me, and fill the newspapers with my praises, and draw crowds of people after me wherever I go. Then, when I had made myself famous, I would be nominated for President, and, if I were elected, I should give each of you a place in my Cabinet. Now, tell me if I am not more generous than any of you?”

The boys smiled rather provokingly; but just then they observed that Uncle Dennis, whom they had supposed to be engaged in reading, was watching them with an appearance of interest, so they kept silence. The old gentleman laid aside his book, raised his spectacles to his forehead, folded his arms slowly, and said in a tone that invited confidence :

“Well, my young friends, I can think of something better for each of you than to become such men as you have been describing.”

“What is that, sir?” asked Charles.

“It is that you should be Christians. Suppose, Hubert, that, when you are grown up, you should become even a greater traveler than you ever dream

of now. Suppose that you should visit every city on the face of the earth, and voyage from the South Pole to the North, in what place could you expect to find happiness if you did not carry in your own heart 'the peace that passeth all understanding'? And you, Charles, if you should be permitted to become the possessor of untold weights of gold and silver, could your money purchase the favor of God, or secure the salvation of your soul? I need not remind James that all worldly knowledge is unsatisfying, and not to be compared with the 'wisdom that cometh from above;' and I hope that Henry, in his visions of future greatness, will not forget the lines of the poem he read to me last evening:

'The boast of pageantry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.'

'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' said one who had experienced more than most others of earthly joy; but, believe me, boys, 'happy is he whose transgression is covered, whose sin is forgiven.' But I suppose you all mean to seek religion at some time, do you not?"

The boys nodded assent.

“Then all I have to say to you is, do not delay, for it is dangerous. I remember reading that once, a great many years ago, one of the dikes of Holland was in need of repair. You know what the dikes are; they are very large banks, composed of earth, clay, and stone, that have been built in order to prevent the sea from overflowing the country, which is low and flat. Well, there was a small hole in one of these dikes; the water came oozing through slowly, and the people, knowing that this was a sign of danger, held a meeting to consider what was best to be done. But they concluded that they would not be in a hurry about repairing the injury; it was a small one, perhaps only the work of a water-rat; some future time would do as well as the present. This procrastination was their ruin. While they delayed, the dike grew gradually weaker and weaker; and one bright Sabbath evening the sea burst suddenly upon them, overwhelming many towns and ninety villages, and destroying a hundred thousand of the inhabitants. These Hollanders were very foolish, you say; and so they were. But they were not more foolish than you will be if you put

off obtaining the forgiveness of your sins. You are young now, and death and judgment may seem a great way off. But they may be nearer than you think. Listen now to the invitations of mercy, lest you should some time experience the truth of this terrible threatening: 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.' If you want to be saved at last, be Christians *now*."





X.

The Wrong Way.

DING—ding—ding! It was time for school to be dismissed. Books were neatly piled together, slates hurried into the desks, sponges and pen-wipers put in their places.

“Those who have not whispered to-day and who have recited their lessons perfectly may arise!” Fifteen boys and as many little girls arose from their seats. Miss Crayton began to call their names. As they passed out of the school-room, each one received a card with the word “Perfect” printed upon it.

In the class of honor for the day were a brother and sister—George and Lillie Raymond. Their home was more than a mile distant; so, without stopping to talk or play with the others, they started

immediately on their return. As they walked along, Lillie held her card in her hand, and appeared to take pleasure in looking at it; but George had thrust his into his pocket, as though he were ashamed of being its possessor. Lillie hummed a cheerful tune, but her brother was silent. Pretty soon he exclaimed, "Lillie, what do you see in that card that is so very attractive? Any one would suppose that you had never had one before."

"Oh! I was just thinking how pleased mother would be to know that we had both been perfect to-day."

"Well, the cards won't make her know that. All that they do is to help us get out of school early. After we're once dismissed, they're good for nothing, that I know of."

"They show, at least, that we have tried to do what is right; that is, if we have been honest about our report. But, George, I thought I saw you whispering to-day."

"Well, what if you did? Miss Crayton didn't."

"Why, George, I didn't think you would deceive!"

"That isn't deceiving; it's only whispering. I

don't mind talking, or writing notes either, if I'm sure that I won't be caught."

"Well, I think it's very dishonest. It seems to me like telling a story to break the rules whenever you have a chance, and then to report that you have been perfect."

"Why, I don't say any thing—I only stand up. Standing up isn't telling a story."

"But, you know, mother says we can act an untruth as well as speak it, and it seems to me that what you did was acting an untruth. Don't you think so?"

George knew very well that he was wrong and his sister right, but he was unwilling to acknowledge this; so he answered with an expression of contempt, intended to silence both his sister and his conscience: "Oh! how particular you girls are. What would have been the use of my staying in that hot room another half-hour just for the sake of being as precise as a Puritan? It wouldn't have done Miss Crayton any good, nor myself either."

"But are you sure that it did you no harm to come away?"

"Harm! I should think not. Fresh air is

healthier than impure air for a fellow to breathe!" And George laughed at what he considered his wit.

"Oh! you know what I mean," said Lillie, with a look of perplexity on her face, "only you pretend not to understand me. Are you sure that it did no harm to your character?"

"Well, I guess my character won't suffer. I'm as honest as the rest of the boys. They cheat, too, when they can."

"But that doesn't make it right for you to cheat."

"Well, I'll you what I think. I think you ought to be a Methodist preacher; the way you do corner a fellow is terrible. I suppose I may as well plead guilty."

"Then, you won't do so again, will you, George?"

"No; not unless it happens to be convenient."

"But I'm afraid that it will be convenient, and I know it always will be wrong; so promise me now, won't you?"

"Well, yes; I'll promise, if you won't lecture me any more."

The remainder of the walk was spent in pleasant conversation upon various subjects, and, on reaching home, the children found their mother watching for

them at the gate. Lillie held up her card triumphantly, but George only gave a contemptuous grunt, and turned away with an air that seemed to say, "Such trifles may do very well to amuse girls and babies; but we boys are entirely too large to care for any thing of the sort."

Lillie took no notice of his sneering manner; but the next morning, as the two approached the school-house, she said warningly, "George, don't forget your promise."

The only reply was a prolonged whistle, which, to say the least, sounded rather dubious; but the pair of bright eyes that, from the girls' side of the room, kept watch all day upon a particular desk on the boys' side failed to detect any thing but what was most exemplary in Master Raymond's deportment. Of course, he never said so; but as this good conduct continued for days, weeks, months, and even years, Lillie inferred that her brother had come to the conclusion that the honorable course was the manly one, and that, upon the whole, it would be the better plan for him to pursue.

But it may be that there are other boys and, perhaps, some girls, who think as George did, that it is

no harm to do a little wrong if they can do it without being seen.

If they break the rules in school, or disobey their parents at home, and succeed in concealing the act, they imagine that they have been very cunning indeed—have done something to boast of rather than to be sorry for. To judge from their behavior, one would imagine that they had been brought up in ancient Sparta, where children were taught by their parents to commit theft, and were punished if discovered.

But they would not steal, these American boys and girls—they are entirely too respectable for that. Oh! no. They would not steal now, certainly not; but they will tell what they call a fib, or a white lie, when they are accused of doing a wrong. They will accustom themselves to twisting the truth and making it appear very different from what it is, and, after a while, they will begin—not to steal—but to take little things that no one will miss. And then, once having begun, where will they end? How long will it be before they will take things of greater value—before they will find themselves on the high road to disgrace and misery? Beware of trifling

with the truth. "It is the first wrong step that costs;" that once taken, the others are all too easy. Love honesty; not because it is the best policy, but because it is right and good and safe






XI:

Whom to Believe.



“LL is not gold that glitters,” says the proverb, and every one knows that the proverb is true. Especially nowadays, when brass jewelry is made to resemble that of purer metal; when diamonds are made of paste, and flower-gardens of muslin and paper; when it is hard to tell whether a lady’s ringlets are curled by the hand of nature or of the hair-dresser, and whether our morning’s beverage is composed of coffee or chiccory—it is very difficult, indeed, to distinguish the false from the true, the natural from the artificial. But even before the era of Yankee invention deception was by no means an unknown thing. More than two thousand years ago, David “said in his

haste that all men were liars;" and, long before his time, Paradise was lost in consequence of a falsehood. Ever since the fall, the leaves of the rose have concealed the thorn; ever since the days of the first murderer, men have attempted to deceive not only one another, but even themselves and their Maker. They have been too ready to believe as well as to teach that which is untrue; too willing to receive the doctrines of the ignorant or cunning, rather than the words of those who speak the truth in the love of it. In every age there have been many who have preferred to reverence false gods of man's device rather than the Lord who made the heavens. Not only during the old dispensation was it possible that the chosen people could leave the worship of Jehovah to bow before a golden calf; but, strangely enough, ever since the time when He who was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person declared" to us "the only name whereby we can be saved," there have been multitudes always eager to follow the "false Christs" and "false prophets" whom he foretold should come and should "deceive many." One of the most notable of these prophets was Mohammed, or, as his name is

sometimes written, Mahomet, a word signifying *the Praised*. He lived about thirteen hundred years ago, in Arabia. His birthplace was the city of Mecca. While he was yet very young, his parents died, and he was left to the care first of his grandfather, then of an uncle. Much of Arabia, as is well known, is a vast desert; and the merchants who wish to cross it with their goods are accustomed to travel in large companies, called caravans. In one of these caravans Mohammed and his uncle went with some merchandise to Syria. There the boy learned something of the Jewish and, perhaps, of the Christian religion. Before, he had known only the worship of his own people, who were idolaters, adoring the images of men, eagles, lions, antelopes, and other animals, as well as the sun, moon, and stars. Some time after his return to his own country, he married a wealthy widow, whose property relieved him from the necessity of being compelled to exert himself for a support. He lived in ease, part of the time in solitude, until he reached the age of forty, when he first announced himself as the founder of a new religion. He taught the people the to them before unknown truth that there is but one God, the Maker of heaven

and earth ; but he also taught (whether he believed it himself is uncertain) that he was a prophet of the Most High. His creed, which he said had been revealed to him by the angel Gabriel, is contained in these few words : "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet."

He at first made few converts and many enemies ; but by dint of deceiving his disciples with wonderful accounts of visions and revelations with which he pretended to have been favored, and of promising everlasting happiness to those who believed on him and eternal misery to those who did not, he soon persuaded many to embrace his cause. Those who were not convinced by persuasion were conquered by the sword, and, in the course of a few years, Mohammed became master of the whole of Arabia. Though calling himself a priest of God, he was polluted with the guilt of many murders, having killed, at one time, between six and seven hundred Jews, who were unfortunate enough to have fallen into his hands. Beside this, he committed other crimes, which he taught the people would be wrong for them, but for him were right and proper. He composed a book called the Koran, in which he said that

prayer, fasting, charity, and making pilgrimages to his birthplace, Mecca, were the four principal duties of man. This book is the Bible of the Mohammedans, and is about equal in size to the New Testament. Those who believe in its teachings consider its author as the greatest of prophets—greater even than Him whom we adore as our prophet, priest, and king. The reverence with which they regard him is almost incredible; and during his lifetime, even the hairs which fell from his head were considered holy. He died at the age of sixty-three in the city of Medina, leaving multitudes of the faithful to mourn his loss and cherish his memory. There are now supposed to be, in different parts of the Eastern continent, at least one hundred and sixty millions who are followers of the false prophet. Is it not strange that men will turn away from Him who is “the way, the truth, and the life” to worship one, sinful like themselves, whose words were filled with deceit, and whose promises of either present or future happiness were unworthy to be trusted?

But so it is. They are ever too ready to forsake the truth and believe a lie; to obey the words of an artful and ambitious mortal rather than the voice of

“him that speaketh from heaven.” They are willing to make pilgrimages to Mecca, or Jerusalem, or Rome, but not to walk in the narrow path that leads to life. They will give their bodies to be burned, and bestow all their goods to feed the poor, in order to purchase heaven by their own good works; but they will not confide in Him who died for the sins of the whole world. Why is it that they persist in trusting any one or any thing rather than Christ? Why is it that they will follow all the false guides of earth, and resolutely shut their eyes upon the Sun of Righteousness? Reader, beware! “He that believeth in him shall be saved; but he that believeth not is condemned already.”





XII.

The Darkness and the Light.



LONG time ago, there stood on the northern coast of Africa a strong and powerful city. It was built more than eight hundred years before the birth of Christ by Queen Dido, who, having been obliged to fly from her native country, Phœnicia, in Asia, sailed with a few followers and vast treasures in search of a new home and kingdom. Arriving in Africa, she purchased from the natives a spot of ground, and then commencing to build houses and walls around and upon it, called the place Carthage, or the New City.

By degrees the colony increased until it became a great nation, ruling not only in its own country but also in various parts of Europe; disputing for em-

pire with the Romans, the most powerful people of the age, and sending its merchant-vessels in every direction throughout the then known world.

Yet the Carthaginians were ignorant and wicked. They knew little of books, or music, or painting, and their only aim was to make money—to become rich—whether by good means or bad. Their deceitfulness at length became a proverb, so common among them were falsehood and treachery. But this is not at all wonderful; for these people had no knowledge of the true God, nor of the Bible, the word of life. They worshiped the woods, the meadows, and the streams, the sun and the stars, beside many gods of the other heathen nations around them. But the two divinities whom they most honored were Urania, or the moon, to whom they were accustomed to pray for rain; and Saturn, or, as he is called in the Bible, Moloch, whose worship Queen Dido and her followers had brought with them from Phoenicia. This last god was a most terrible one. The people did not think of him at all as we think of our kind Father in heaven, who will not let a sparrow fall to the ground without his notice, who cares for all his creatures, and who loved us so ex-

ceedingly that he sent his Son to die for our salvation.

No; their Moloch was a terrible monster, who, if they failed to please him, would punish them most severely, and to whom they must yield, without a murmur, their dearest earthly possessions. For what, do you suppose, were the sacrifices which were offered to this cruel god? What but little children, whom their own fathers and mothers suffered to be burned before their eyes! In times of danger even kings thus sacrificed their sons; and the people, imitating their example, if they had no children of their own, purchased them of others, that, by the murder of these innocent victims, they might procure the favor of their god. Before the appointed day for one of their great festivals, a huge brazen statue was made, having the body of a man, the head of an ox, and containing in the lower part the fire which was to consume the offerings. Besides, the image had large, spreading arms, in which, when the time of the sacrifice had come, mothers laid their babes without a tear, and then endeavored to soothe their fear as they fell into the flames beneath; while the priests of this terrible religion endeavored, with songs and instru-

ments of music, to drown the cries of the sufferers. In later times parents, scarcely less inhuman, contented themselves with causing their children merely to pass through the fire, but even then few escaped death.

Surely this was a strange sort of worship; and yet Moloch was not the only god of ancient times to whom offerings so cruel were presented; for, at the time when Carthage flourished, there lived in the country from which many of our forefathers came—in England, the land now filled with those who know and love the story of Christ and his cross—a savage race of men, even more rude and ignorant than the Carthaginians themselves. Though they adored but one God, the Maker of all things, they regarded him only with awe; for his pity toward his creatures was to them an unknown thing. They worshiped in large temples, built of massive stone in the midst of the forest. Their priests were called Druids. They governed the people not only in religion but in all other affairs, and by threats of punishment after death in case of disobedience, succeeded in securing obedience to their commands. Of course, it was not difficult for them to cause such offerings as they

pleased to be presented to their god, and, like the inhabitants of Carthage, they selected human sacrifices, believing these most acceptable to the deity.

Imagine yourself in one of the English forests on a holy day of long ago. The uncovered temple, surrounded by numberless majestic oaks, is entered by a company of venerable men, clad in long, white garments, wearing beards which reach even to their girdles, their whole aspect one of conscious dignity. They are attended by a motley crowd of their disciples, every face lighted with a glow of savage anticipation. The eyes of all are directed toward the altar on which the fires of sacrifice are to be kindled. But it is a very strange altar, indeed; built neither of timber nor stone, but of ozier twigs, and its form is in the image of a man. Soon the victims are led forth and placed, one by one, in the huge basket. They are mostly men and women who are thus to be punished for their crimes; but here and there among them may be seen little children who are to be packed into the spaces too small to be filled by those of larger growth. When all is ready, the signal is given, and the high-priest, advancing with a lighted torch, sets fire to this costly funeral pile; and then,

while the flames ascend heavenward, sings songs of barbaric praise to the unknown god, who is thus ignorantly worshiped. Ought we not, indeed, to be thankful that the day of this darkness is past, that He who is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" has given us his gospel to show unto us "a more excellent way"? We adore, not as did our heathen forefathers, a cruel and pitiless judge, but a God whose compassion is infinite. No need have we to offer sacrifices on account of our guilt; for Christ has become "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Parents no longer give their children to be burned in order thus to win the favor of Heaven; but, dedicating them from their infancy to the service of the all-merciful Father, cause them to be baptized in his name, in that of the Saviour, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and in that of the Holy Spirit, who will, if they ask him, sanctify them through the truth. Ought not our very mercies to lead us to repent that we have so often sinned against Him who, by bestowing them upon us, has favored us far above others? And while we ask of him that we may be forgiven

for our transgressions, let us not forget to pray for the millions of heathen who are still living in "the region and shadow of death;" to pray that very soon they may "behold a great light," even the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness.





XIII.

Oito and his Tree.

THOUSANDS of miles away, where the waves of the great Pacific forever rise and roll, distant alike from the Eastern and the Western continents, is Polynesia, the region of many islands. Sometimes lying so low that they could be scarcely seen by the travelers in approaching ships, were it not for the thick woods which cover their surface—sometimes rising like mountains from the midst of the water, these islands are, all of them, either entirely or in part, the work of the coral insect. They occur singly and in groups, and have, of late years, become celebrated in consequence of the great changes which have taken place within them, since missionaries were first sent from other

lands to tell the people of that far-off clime the ever new and wondrous story of Jesus and his cross ; for, less than one hundred years ago, those who lived in the region of which we are speaking were all heathen, ignorant of the true God, worshipers of senseless idols, delighting in war, murder, and every sort of evil deeds. Now, however, the case is different. The people have learned from the Bible "a more excellent way," and are glad to give up their idolatry and cruel practices in order to serve the living God.

But imagine yourself on a certain one of these islands before this change has occurred. It is one which is neither level nor wholly mountainous, but is crowned with lofty hills, whose sides are covered with verdure, and indented with valleys, where trees and flowers and fruits alike grow in rich profusion. Yet the thick foliage conceals no raging beasts that "go about seeking whom they may devour," and cooling breezes from the south-east temper the heat of the sun. It is, indeed, an earthly paradise ; but those who live within it know nothing of "that better country, even a heavenly." Not far from the shore, just at the foot of a high hill, a scene of busy labor presents itself to view. Oito, the island

chief, together with his copper-colored companions, is rearing his royal palace, which is to be neither more nor less than a wooden hut, rudely made and as rudely furnished, and surrounded by other huts perhaps even inferior to itself. With rough, half-formed implements, the stalwart red men fell, one by one, the cluster of bread-fruit trees near by, and then carry the timber to the place appointed for the building.

"We will spare this tree," says Oito, the chief, "that its fruit may refresh us when we return wearied to our homes at night, and strengthen us when we awake at morning desiring food. Others like it flourish in yonder wood, but this will be more convenient for us. Yes, we will spare this tree."

Five sunny years of unending spring have passed over Oito's head; but wintry blasts more withering far than those of northern winds have chilled his spirits. War—the cruel, unrelenting war of savage hearts and hands—approached his island-home, and Oito feared it not.

Unmoved, except by a sort of joyful anticipation, he looked out over the waters and beheld his enemies, the inhabitants of the nearest isle, carefully

threading their way through the coral reef which he had once deemed his protection, and skillfully guiding their canoes amid the greater dangers near the shore. Bravely he went forth to meet them, attended by his band of followers. But alas! his strength was weakness, and the might of his arm was unavailing to repel the power of the invaders. Overcome by numbers, his warriors falling fast on every side, Oito, with a few companions, is compelled to seek safety in flight. Through the night they wander, sheltered by the thick foliage of the groves; and at morning, creeping cautiously forth from their hiding-place, they find their homes a mass of smoking ruins; wives and children have been carried they know not whither, and the fruit-trees upon which their lives depend, having been stripped of their precious burden, lie prostrate on the ground.

Thirsty, and ready to faint from hunger and fatigue, the humbled chieftain seeks eagerly among the branches, if perchance he may discover some scanty remains of the fruit which yesterday hung gracefully above his head. But the work of destruction has been faithfully performed, and Oito turns hungering away.

Yet, what is that he discerns towering amid the curling mists of smoke? Can it be a delusion? or is the vision real? The tree which was spared before has again escaped destruction. And now most nobly it fulfills the end for which it was created. The dark-brown nuts scattered here and there among the green leaves furnish both food and drink to the famished warriors, and the bark supplies new raiment for their bodies. Gladly they receive the blessings, so grateful in their hour of need. The tree whose life they saved has saved their own.

Reader, you have read in the book better than all books beside, the story of another tree, whose owner, seeking food thereon, found none. You remember the command unto his servant, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" and that, though another trial was granted, it was only one more; either it must bear fruit, or must perish. You, too, have been placed by the Great Husbandman in this field of the world. Through another year the dews of his grace have been shed around you, the sunshine of his love has beamed upon you; and though death, the great destroyer, has smitten many, very many, of those who, twelve months ago, were by your side,

your days have been prolonged. And now the Master looks for fruit. Shall he find it, or shall he not? He seeks deeds of kindness, concerning which he may say, in the last great day of account, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." He seeks for the "fruit of the Spirit"—which all who will may bear—for "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Seek for his aid to do his will, that thus you may "glorify God, and enjoy him forever."





XIV.

Effie's Lesson.



IT was not a lesson in spelling, or geography, or arithmetic, that Effie had to learn; not a chapter in the Bible, nor a page in the catechism. It is true that she was frequently required to study all of these; but not only often, always, every hour and moment and day from the time she first began to speak until ten years of her life had passed, she had need of learning the lesson which was till then postponed. If Effie had been alone in this necessity, it would be useless to expose the fault which caused it; but she has plenty of company. Far too many, both boys and girls, stand in the same class with her in the great school of the world, all alike requiring

to have taught them the value and the beauty of the virtue of contentment. When Willie comes home grumbling because his studies are too difficult, or his teacher too strict; because his clothes are not made to suit him, or his dinner not cooked to his taste, his fault-finding is very good proof that he needs to possess this jewel.

When Jenny complains that her dress is too plain, the weather too warm, the trimming on her bonnet half a shade too dark; when a frown clouds her face because her seat in Sunday-school does not please her, because a poor man's child sits near by; because the library-book is one in which she has possibly read a page or more—you may be quite sure that she is one of Effie's companions.

But now for the story. Mr. Eldridge's home was a delightful one; its appearance showed it to be the abode of wealth and luxury; every thing within and without was contrived for the comfort and pleasure of the inmates. Looking at it, the passer-by would have said, "Here, if anywhere, one might be happy," and his observation would have been just. But living in a place so beautiful was not the only nor even the greatest blessing that Effie enjoyed. God

had given her loving parents, who cared not only for her body, but also for the soul which dwelt within; and her playmates were three little brothers, all of them bright and healthy, and very fond of their sister. But a discontented mind will make itself trouble if it can not find any ready-made; and Effie certainly displayed a great deal of ingenuity in discovering excuses for complaining. She found fault with one thing or another every day and all day long. If the sky was cloudy, she would exclaim, "O dear! how dark it is; I wish it would grow lighter!" And if the sun shone out clear and full, she worried because its beams were too bright or its rays too warm. The roses in the garden were lovely; but she didn't see why they had to have thorns. The flowers looked prettiest in the morning; she wished they would not always be so covered with dew then that she could not gather them. Her kitten was a dear little thing; but what a pity it was that it had claws: and Rover was a splendid dog; but he had such a horrible bark!

Of course, if Effie found so many imperfections in the works of the great Creator, it could not be expected that any thing of human workmanship would

appear to her free from defect. Did her mother buy her a new dress, it was either too coarse or too fine, too dark or too light. Did her father bring her a curious toy, it was good enough, but so much like what she had had before. In fact, it was almost impossible to please this fastidious young lady. She had so many things to enjoy that she prized none of them rightly. She needed to be deprived of some of her mercies in order to learn how to appreciate those that remained.

One day, in the course of what at first seemed to be a vain search after trouble, she suddenly discovered that her eyes were not of the right color. Now, this may appear to you to have been a very trifling discovery; nevertheless, it was attended with important consequences to Effie. Why, she had now found a cause for complaint which would last all through her life; and though there was a scowl on her brow whenever she mentioned the fact, it evidently was to her a source of real pleasure. She could murmur now by night or by day, whether alone or in company; her eyes would certainly always be with her, and furnish an excuse for discontent. They were very good eyes, it is true, very

useful, indeed, quite essential to her enjoyment of the good things of earth ; but, notwithstanding all this, they were gray—not at all pretty ; and if they had only been blue or black, she might have been handsome. So the child continually tormented herself and grieved her friends by her sinful fault-finding with one of the best gifts of her Maker. A great part of her time she spent before the glass—now darkening the room, now lighting it—endeavoring in some way to make those perverse eyes at least look blue, if only for a moment ; and by night she dreamed again and again of a certain good fairy who was to come down the chimney some cold winter evening and grant her whatever wish she might have, which wish can, of course, be easily imagined. How much better would it have been for Effie if, instead of thus foolishly fretting about a matter of no consequence, she had been troubled about the blackness of her wicked heart, and, because of that, with a sorrow that needed not to be repented of, had prayed that it might be “made white in the blood of the Lamb.” It is well to be thus dissatisfied with the sinfulness of our souls, but is it not strange that

any should be discontented with their bodies, so "fearfully and wonderfully made"?

At length, Effie learned the lesson she had needed so long. "O Effie, Effie!" Charlie exclaimed, as he came running to her room one morning in the spring-time, "Papa has bought a house in the country, and we are all going to move there next week!"

"Oh! are we really? Isn't that splendid?" and for once, Effie was more than contented, she was in ecstasies. But no, she was not quite contented, even then; she didn't know why they had to wait so long; she thought they might go the next day. But her parents said it was impossible to do so, and the young lady was obliged to control her impatience as best she could through five long days and nights. They passed at length, and so did the journey to the new home, and at last, Effie and her brothers were really in the country for the first time in their lives. What a shouting and hurraing there was, as they jumped from the carriage and ran about to explore the new domain!

First the house, then the lawn, the garden, and the orchard were in turn visited and examined. Presently, their mother's voice was heard calling,

"Come, children ; you have seen enough for one day ; it is time for you to rest."

"O dear ! I think we might stay out a little longer ; we have not had near all the fun we want," Effie replied. Of course, it could not be expected that she would be satisfied with the pleasure she had already experienced ; she always wanted something more.

"Effie, did you hear what I said ? I want you to come to the house immediately."

"Yes, ma'am, in a minute. I just want to see what's in this tree." And the disobedient girl ran forward toward a large apple-tree which she just then happened to notice. The trunk, which was hollow, was very thick, with a wide opening on one side of it. "Oh ! see here. This is house enough for me." And, stooping down, Effie disappeared through the opening.

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz ! what could be flying around her head ? Sting, sting, sting ! the child screamed with pain, but was too terrified to escape from the bees' nest into which she had thus rudely intruded.

Her cries brought her parents to the spot, who in

some way contrived to draw their daughter out of the tree. But in what a condition ! Her face was completely covered with stings, and her eyes were already swollen shut. Gray or black, Effie would have given any thing then to have had them become as they had been a few moments before. But the punishment she had brought upon herself was too severe to admit of her thinking then of any thing save her suffering. It was not till hours afterward that, as she lay, still sightless and disfigured, in a darkened room, she said to herself: "How strange it is that an accident should have happened to my eyes just when I had been worrying so much about them. I really believe it is because I was not satisfied with their color. I shouldn't care about that now, if I could only open them. I don't think I will ever be discontented with any thing good again—it is so very sad to have it taken away."

Was not Effie's conclusion a very sensible one? Probably her lesson was thoroughly committed to memory.



XV.

Who shall be Greatest?

ONE beautiful morning in the spring, when the birds were singing their sweetest songs in the midst of the blossoms on the fruit-trees; when the dandelions were glowing in the grass, and rarer flowers were blooming in the beds, Frank and Eddy went out into the garden to play. "Be kind to one another," said their mother, as they left the house, and then she took her seat by the window, where she could watch them without being seen. You know that mothers are so very fond of having their children always in sight, especially when they are these wide-awake, mischievous, fun-loving little boys and girls, always getting into trouble, and always coming to "mother" for help. But

Frank and Eddy managed to keep out of mischief that morning—indeed, they played so quietly for some time that Mrs. Woolsey wondered at the stillness; but it was only the calm before a storm, as she afterward found to her sorrow.

“Eddy, go to the house and get your drum, and something to fight with, and we will play soldier.”

“Well, but I’m going to be captain.”

“No, you’re not. I’ll be captain myself; I’m the oldest.”

“But I was drummer yesterday, and I think you ought to be to-day.”

“I guess I wouldn’t be ordered by any body younger than I am. I’m going to be captain, or I won’t play at all.”

“Well,” said Eddy, his lip quivering and the tears fast coming into his eyes. He had wanted to have the command very much, but he was unwilling to be left to amuse himself alone, so he went for the necessary weapons.

Do you think that either brother was as happy then as though both had been kind and obliging, not seeking each his own advantage, but in “honor preferring one another”?

Eddy was sorry that he could not obtain the coveted position, and Frank, who was older, and ought to have set an example of good behavior, already began to feel that he had acted selfishly and unbecomingly. However, he was too proud to confess this; so when Eddy came running back with his father's cane in lieu of a sword, a broom-handle intended for a gun, and the drum swung over his shoulder by a strap, he meekly took his place in the ranks, and followed the commands, "Shoulder arms!" "Mark time!" "Right about face!" etc., etc., with implicit obedience. He and the captain were just in the midst of a forced march in pursuit of the enemy, when a cry of terror was heard from over the fence.

"What's that?" the whole army—that is to say, the two boys—exclaimed at once, and both ran to the spot from which the sound had proceeded.

"Oh! it's only a little beggar girl. Come back, Eddy!" And Frank turned away disdainfully.

His brother remained to investigate affairs. "What's the matter, little girl?" he asked of the child, by whose side was an overturned basket.

"That cow over there upset my basket, and I was

taking the bread home for dinner." She looked as though her greatest treasures had suffered injury, as indeed they had.

"Never mind, I'll help you," said Eddy kindly; and stooping down, he began collecting the scattered pieces of bread. The little girl, who was scarcely large enough to be trusted out of doors alone, assisted him in the task, and soon all the damage had been repaired. But Eddy did not stop here; he thought he had not done quite enough; so he said as politely as possible: "I will go with you a way, so that you need not be afraid of the cow."

The child thankfully accepted the offer, and was conducted beyond the reach of danger. As Eddy returned to the garden, he was met by his brother, who saluted him in no very respectful tones with these words:

"Well, I don't think I'd take the trouble to help a little beggar girl. I'd like to know what mother would say to see you in such company as that?"

"Would you? Then come to the house, and you shall hear what I would say."

Mrs. Woolsey's watchful eyes and ears had followed her children all the morning. She had heard

the dispute about their play, had witnessed the sudden close of their sport, and the ready kindness shown by her younger son to the little stranger; and now she had come to take her boys aside for a short talk, in order to teach them, if she could, some useful lesson from the incidents of the day.

When they had reached the sitting-room, and Frank and Eddy had taken their places, one on each side of her, their mother asked :

“Can either of you tell me what is generally the reason why people fight against each other?”

The boys hung their heads in silence; they began to suspect that they had not been so entirely alone in the garden as they had supposed. But Mrs. Woolsey waited for a reply, so Frank answered :

“It’s because they want to kill their enemies; isn’t it?”

“Yes; but why do they have enemies? and why do they wish to destroy them? Is it not often because they desire to make themselves powerful? You have read in your history of Cæsar, the Roman general; of Alexander, the Macedonian king; of Napoleon, the emperor of the French. All of these, you know, the world calls great; but each of them

was willing to bring sorrow upon countless multitudes, if only he could secure authority to himself." And their mother went on to tell them how much trouble had been made in the world because men wanted to control each other—very much, she said, as two little boys whom she knew of—and how there had been many wars, and a great deal of fighting, and millions upon millions had been slain for the reason that some one or another had been all the time trying to make himself powerful; and how few had been willing to follow in humility the footsteps of the Son of Man, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

After that, Mrs. Woolsey read from the Bible how Jesus, the great Teacher, taught his disciples, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

"And now," she continued, "which do you think is the more manly thing for a son of mine to do—to insist upon ruling his brother, even while engaged in play, or to leave his sport in order to help a little outcast, and thus follow the example of Christ when he washed his disciples' feet? One of you succeeded

in making himself captain, the other in imitating this example. Which do you think is really the greater, according to the rule I have just taught you? I do not wish to judge either of you harshly; but hereafter, whenever a dispute like that of this morning arises, I hope you will remember the words of the Apostle who wrote, ‘In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.’ ”





XVI.

Carrie's Idol.



BEFORE we begin to talk about Carrie, or any of her sayings or doings, it will be necessary to ask the question, What is an idol?

An idol, some little girl will say, is an image that is worshiped instead of the true God.

This is, no doubt, a correct answer to the question, but, at the same time, it is not the only answer which might be given. The heathen, it is true, worship senseless blocks of gold or silver, wood or stone—the work which their own hands have made; but there are people in this Christian land who would spurn such folly as this, and yet who, nevertheless, have their idols also, which are only even

more real than the meaningless figures before which the nations that forget God too often bow in adoration. Sometimes we love our friends too fondly, and think more of them than of the kind Father who gave them to us, together with every other blessing which we possess. When we do this, we idolize our friends.

Sometimes, too, we make gods of our pleasures, and so long as we can enjoy them, care little whether or not we are walking in the straight and narrow path which leads to life eternal. To which of these different sorts of idols Carrie's belonged, the reader is left to determine.

"Carrie," said her mother, one Saturday evening, "it is time to put away your playthings now. You have had a good time with them all day, and to-morrow, you know, will be the Sabbath. I want you to rise early in order to prepare for Sunday-school; so get ready now to say good-night."

"Yes, mother, just as soon as I finish this castle, and put dolly's night-dress on her. It will only take a few minutes."

Mrs. Almar made no reply. She had accustomed her daughter to obey, and obey at once, whatever

command she might give; and she supposed that the child's knowledge of what was right would prevent her from disobeying now, for the first time in her life. But Carrie's conscience appeared to have gone asleep for a little while, and Carrie herself was so engaged with her play that she forgot her mother's words almost as soon as they were uttered. The castle was finished, and then overthrown. A new one was just beginning to rise from the ruins, when Mrs. Almar reluctantly spoke the second time: "Carrie, did you not hear what I said?"

"Oh! yes, mother. I forgot. I'm coming, just as soon as I put dolly in bed."

"No, Carrie, come right away. I am grieved to see that you disobey me." What sudden change had come over her usually obedient child Mrs. Almar knew not, but great was her amazement to see Carrie still quietly continue her amusement. It was time that some decided measure should be taken. "Carrie, I have spoken to you twice already. Now mind me instantly." Carrie was convinced by the firm yet kindly tone, and by her mother's evident displeasure; that further disobedience would not be the part of wisdom; so she put away her toys as

slowly and with as much delay as possible, and bade her mother good-night.

"I do love to see the children happy," remarked the lady that evening to her husband, "but Carrie is really too fond of play. She is unwilling to attend to any thing else properly, and to-night she even dared to disobey me when I desired her to lay aside her toys. I do not know how I shall ever teach her that there is any thing more important than having a little fun."

But, surprised and grieved as Mrs. Almar had already been, she was destined to be still more greatly astonished at her daughter's conduct. Early the next morning Carrie awoke; but do you suppose that it was with a heart thankful to God for his mercies, and prepared to engage in his worship and service? By no means. Carrie's love of play had led her to disregard the commands of her mother, and now it caused her to forget the law of One who is far greater and better than any on earth. "Lillie," she whispered to her sister a couple of years younger than herself, "Lillie, let's get up and play school. You may be teacher, and dolly and I will be the scholars."

Lillie was quick enough to accept the proposition, and before many minutes, the little girls were seated in front of their baby-house "playing school." They had just begun an exercise in vocal music, when Mrs. Almar, attracted by the sound, suddenly entered the room. "Carrie, Lillie! what are you doing? Have you forgotten the verse I taught you last week,

'I must not work, I must not play
Upon God's holy Sabbath day?'

It was Carrie's turn now to be surprised. "Why, mother, is it Sabbath? I forgot all about it, indeed I did. We didn't think we were doing any harm, did we, Lillie?"

Lillie answered "no" in a rather hesitating way; but Mrs. Almar looked as grave as before. "I am afraid you have no very good excuse, Carrie. You know the Bible says that we must '*remember* the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;' and that is precisely what you have failed to do. You have been so eager for a little sport that you have forgotten both God and his word. There is no harm in liking to play, at proper times and places; but it is wrong to be so interested in what you like to do as to neglect

what you ought to do. We must go now, father is waiting for us; but we will have a longer talk this afternoon." Carrie felt rather guilty and mortified all day; and when, toward evening, her mother entered the nursery, according to agreement, and called the little girls to her side, Carrie obeyed the summons, half dreading, half desiring the promised talk.

"I was reading the other day," began Mrs. Almar, "the story of a young lady named Imogene. She lived in a country where most of the people are Roman Catholics, and Imogene had been taught from childhood to count her beads, and pray to the Virgin Mary, and to believe that the priest had power to forgive sins, together with many other foolish notions of which you have never heard. Her parents, who were very wealthy, were exceedingly fond of their daughter, and delighted to give her pleasure. They encouraged her to attend balls, and parties, and theatres, and to engage in all similar amusements, thinking that these would afford her happiness. And Imogene enjoyed them as greatly as could be desired. But after she had passed several years in this manner, the priest finally

persuaded her that her manner of life was altogether wrong, and that, if she wished ever to reach heaven, it was necessary for her to enter the neighboring convent. This was a place inhabited by a number of women, who imagined that, in separating from their friends and going to live together in a large house with stone walls and narrow windows, and in there spending their time according to certain rules, they would become holy and fit for heaven. Contrary to the entreaties of her father and mother, Imogene resolved upon shutting herself up in the convent. Accordingly, she 'took the veil,' as it is called, and by so doing became a nun. After this, a great portion of her life was passed in fastings and prayers. She even denied herself things essential to her comfort, and compelled herself to undergo much bodily suffering, but without becoming any happier or really better. It would take too long for me to tell you how she was at length brought to see that no good works of hers could purchase salvation, and that there is but one name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, and how she afterward escaped from the convent, and spent the remainder of her days in trying to point out to others

the way of life. But what I want to say is this: Imogene was taught by the priest that all earthly enjoyment is sinful, and that the more miserable she made herself the better she would become. The Bible tells us nothing of the kind, but rather that we are 'to rejoice in the Lord always.' God, who loved us so exceedingly that he gave his Son to die for us, wishes us to be happy in this world as well as in the next, and it is only because we are sinful that we are ever unhappy. But at the same time, we must remember that we enjoy ourselves most when we are trying to do what is right, and not when we are only trying to please ourselves. It is not necessary, nor even proper, for us to deny ourselves the innocent pleasures and comforts of life; but we must be careful not to think so much of them that they will make us forget the duty which we owe to God. For instance, it is not wrong for you, Carrie, to like to play—it is natural and right that you should do so; but then your love of play should never lead you to disobey your mother nor to break the Sabbath. We ought to learn to control ourselves, so that we shall not neglect duty for the sake of pleasure. This is what is meant in the Bible by the word 'temperance;'

it is not only not indulging in strong drink, or other things which may be injurious, but not indulging immoderately in any thing, however right or proper it may be in itself. You know the old proverb, that 'Enough is as good as a feast;' and St. Paul tells us that 'the fruit of the Spirit is temperance.' "

Carrie said nothing, but she resolved in her heart that, though she should never be willing to leave her dolls and baby-house and go to live in a convent, she would try to be more temperate in her love of play.





XVII.

Freddie's Triumph.



EVERY BODY knows how easy a thing it sometimes is to lose the control of one's temper, and how hard a thing it generally is not to be angry or irritated when others treat us unkindly. The Bible tells us that "he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," and the wise man who wrote these words knew full well how much more difficult a matter is this same ruling of the spirit than is the braving of toil and suffering and danger to the soldier who goes forth fearlessly to meet the foe. But we all have some hard lessons to learn in this world; and one which every man, woman, and child needs to learn is this lesson of guarding temper and tongue although in the face of

provocation, and of bearing calmly and patiently whatever of sorrow it may please our Father who is in heaven to send upon us, even when the trouble comes by the hands of those who are sinners like ourselves. And to learn this, we need look to no earthly teacher. If we do, we shall fail to obtain that which we seek. It is written of Moses that he was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth; yet when, at Meribah, the people murmured for water, after having received many proofs of God's care for them, even Moses for once grew angry, for once forgot his meekness; and because of that one sin he could not enter the promised land. And if we fail to find in him a perfect example of this "fruit of the Spirit," to whom else can we look for it but unto Him who says to every one that is weary of struggling with sin, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart"? He has help for the humblest and feeblest. All who trust in him shall be made conquerors.

"Good afternoon, Fred! Be sure you're at school early to-morrow morning. We'll have rare fun."

"Oh! yes. I wouldn't miss it for any thing. Good afternoon!"

The first speaker, Nat Taylor, was a tall, manly boy of about fifteen years of age. Perfect health betrayed itself in every movement of his frame, and good humor and intelligence shone out from his sparkling eyes. Only, as we shall see hereafter, his love of mirth sometimes led him to be rude, even at the expense of his friends. The other boy, Freddie, though of the same age, was much smaller in size; so much smaller, that a stranger would have supposed him to be several years younger than his companion. He was not thinking of it then—no emotion but that of gladness lighted up his countenance as he anticipated the sport of helping to complete the snow-palace which his comrades and himself had begun in the school-house yard; but the one great trouble of his life had been and was that, while he had seen his playmates, one by one, grow to be first a little taller than himself, and then continue rising higher and higher until he had to look up to them, almost as much, it seemed to him, as he did to his father, his own height still remained the same; he was always "little Freddie." Not for the world would he have revealed to his companions the annoyance which this fact occasioned him; yet they

could not have failed to notice how his face became grave at any allusion, even the faintest, to his small, childish form, and how it brightened if one happened to express the opinion that "Fred was growing taller." And his mother knew full well how great was the effort which it cost her child when he said to her, in a confidential twilight talk, "I am willing to be small if it is better for me to be so; but I do wish that no one would speak of it before me."

"I know it is unpleasant, Freddie," she replied; "but if any one is thoughtless enough to ridicule your misfortune, remember these words, which you will find in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, 'Charity' (you know that means love) 'is not easily provoked;' and try to think of the example of Him who, 'when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not.' If you ask him, he will help you to overcome your angry passion, which, if uncontrolled, will injure you far more than a few thoughtless words ever can or will." Freddie had need of all the assistance which this advice could render him, on the morning of which we are speaking. He was just in the act of

strapping up his books preparatory to leaving home, about an hour before school-time, when his grandmother said to him, "Freddie, your mother purchased the yarn for your socks yesterday. If you will hold it for me before you go to school, I shall be able to knit considerable to-day." Freddie knew that it would be undutiful, as well as ungrateful, to refuse so small an act of kindness to his grandmother; so he drew off his cap, laid down his books reluctantly, and said, "Well, grandma," as cheerfully as could have been expected under the circumstances. It seemed to him as though that particular pair of socks was destined to contain more wool than any other pair which fingers and knitting-needles had ever fashioned, and as though each skein of the yarn had lengthened out its slow length, until the completion of the work, instead of being nearer, appeared farther and farther off as the winding proceeded. He persevered, however, in his martyrdom, without discovering his impatience, and finally there came an end to the task, as there does, sooner or later, to all earthly things. It did not require many minutes for Freddie to snatch up his cap and books, and be off to the school-house. But what was his disappointment to

find, upon reaching the spot, that, instead of being able, as he had hoped, to participate in the sport of building, he was just in time to witness the completion of the last and highest turret. Nat Taylor, who was the tallest boy in the school, was standing on tiptoe, vainly trying to "finish off" the tower in an artistic fashion. The top was just a little too high for his reach, and the small "brick" of snow which he was endeavoring to place in a particular position, would persist in slipping down, again and again, to the great merriment of the surrounding crowd of boys. He was just turning about in despair, when he saw Fred approaching, all out of breath in his eagerness to reach the scene of interest. "Halloa," shouted Nat, "here comes a regular Goliath. He can reach the top, if I can't. Come on, Fred; you're the tallest boy here; come and finish this turret." The other boys were foolish enough to laugh at this very amusing bit of pleasantry, and the laugh only added to the sting which Nat's careless words brought to Freddie's heart. Was it not too unkind in Nat thus to expose him to the ridicule of the assembled school? Had he not already that morning wrestled sufficiently with his temper, with-

out having it so sorely tried just at the time when he expected nothing but delight? It was really too bad! he would make Nat repent of that speech; and Freddie hastily began to form a small, compact ball of snow. If he had not the stature of Goliath, he had something of the skill of David; not a boy in Montville could aim straighter than he; and had not David killed Goliath? At first, these thoughts, as they came rushing into his mind in rapid succession, stimulated him to madness. But the last one brought him to himself again. Yes, David had killed Goliath with only a few pebbles, and he might—but he could not bear to think of it—he would not injure Nat for any thing in the world. What had become now of that meekness of which his mother had spoken? What of that charity which is not easily provoked? Freddie's anger was all gone. Instead of it had come the desire to prove to Nat that he was really not offended by the thoughtless ridicule. Dropping the ball which he had till then held firmly clutched in his hand, he replied in tones which betrayed nothing but the utmost good humor, "No, Nat, I'm not so tall as you are; but perhaps it will be just as well for the turret that I am not. If you

will let me stand on your shoulders, I can do the work in a moment." Nat, surprised and ashamed, accepted Freddie's offer, and when this novel effort had been crowned with success, the boys shouted without a single dissenting voice, "Hurrah for Fred! He shall be king in our palace."

Freddie's royalty lasted only until the melting of the snow; but we know that they shall reign as kings for ever and ever, who, like him, overcome in the struggle with self and sin. "The fruit of the Spirit is meekness."





XVIII.

School on a Holiday.

CHRISTMAS had come and gone. The large tree which had adorned Mr. Eldrich's parlor had been robbed of its burden of beautiful gifts, and the crowd of happy children who had assembled to admire its many wonders had returned to the homes which were to be brightened for days by the remembrance of "Mary and Fanny's Christmas-tree."

All had gone but George and Annie Merton, two favorite cousins, who were to remain all through the vacation. "All the vacation!" Who can tell what bright anticipations filled the minds of the four children at the sound of these words?

Mary and Fanny had so much to show, and George and Annie so much to see, and there were so many

games to be played, and so many new presents to receive attention, "that it seemed," as Fanny said, "that a week would not be near long enough for all they had to do."

And the first two days did pass very quickly; but by the afternoon of the third, when all the games they could remember had been played several times, and when most of the presents had lost the first charm of novelty, the children began to grow weary of having nobody to tell them what to do.

"O dear! I am almost tired of holidays," exclaimed Annie.

"So am I," chimed in a chorus of three, and then there was silence.

At length a happy thought struck Fanny. "Let's go and ask Aunt Ella to play school with us." "Oh! yes, that would be real nice," said Annie.

So a committee of the whole was immediately appointed to wait on Aunt Ella, and ask her to become school-mistress. Aunt Ella readily consented to assume the office. "Only," said she, "there is one condition: you must promise to obey whatever I say." The promise was, of course, quickly given; so the school commenced then and there.

"In the first place," said Aunt Ella, "I want you each to tell me which of your studies you like the least."

Mary and Annie announced a special aversion to arithmetic, Fanny to composition, while George "couldn't bear either," but he thought "composition was a little the hardest."

"Well," said Aunt Ella, "George, you and Fanny may each write a composition, and I will give Annie and Mary some examples in arithmetic to perform."

At this the children looked surprised and rather disappointed; but the promise was remembered, so slates and pencils were procured, and the work began.

Aunt Ella was a patient teacher, and with her explanations, the arithmetic lesson, although it was in Long Division, seemed less difficult than any similar one had ever been before.

As for the compositions, after the subjects were once selected, they were written with apparent ease, and in a short time were pronounced finished. Would you like to know what they were? You may read them, if you will not criticise them too se-

verely. Remember that the authors were young. This is George's :

"WINTER.

"Winter is the coldest and the pleasantest season of the year. It is the pleasantest, because then we have skating. Sometimes the girls fall on the ice, but we boys never do—that is, unless we can't possibly help it."

Fanny's subject was :

"CHRISTMAS.

"Christmas is the day on which we celebrate the birth of Christ. Last Monday, father said, was the eighteen hundred and sixty-fifth Christmas. It was a very pleasant day for me, and I received a great many presents ; but mother says there are a good many children who never had a Christmas present in their life. I feel very sorry for them."

Aunt Ella having corrected these compositions, read them aloud to the school, and then said, "I want to ask a question. Who can tell me what was the first Christmas gift?"

The children looked very thoughtful for a moment,

and appeared much perplexed ; but at length Mary exclaimed, " Oh ! I know. It was the presents the wise men from the East brought to Jesus."

Aunt Ella smiled, and said, " Those were certainly the first Christmas gifts he received ; but there was one given to us even before the visit of the wise men. Can you not think of the name of this Christmas gift ?"

" I think you must mean Christ himself," said Annie thoughtfully.


" Yes," said Aunt Ella. " That first Christmas night, God gave his Son to us to be our Saviour. He was the best and greatest Christmas gift that we could receive—a gift so good and so great that he is called in the Bible ' the unspeakable gift.' And since this gift is offered freely to us all, do you not think that each of us should be very glad to receive him as our own ?"

The consciences of the children answered, " Yes," and their faces interpreted the answer. Then, as it was growing dark, Aunt Ella dismissed the school ; but her scholars will never forget that happy afternoon, nor the earnest question with which it ended, What do *you* think of the great Christmas Gift ?



XIX.

Changing his Mind.

“ DEAR! I can never learn this old lesson; and I won't, either!” And James Harris stamped his foot on the floor, jerked his chair from the table at which he had been sitting, and flung his Latin grammar, the innocent cause of his wrath, to the opposite side of the room. Having thus given way to these rather ungentlemanly expressions of indignation, he sat, for a time, in moody silence, his thoughts meanwhile running somewhat after this manner:

“I don't see why my father has to send me to that horrid old school; I wish it was in Jericho. And ma's so particular about my going every day. I don't see what good it does a fellow to study all

these lessons. Be useful when I'm a man, will they? I don't believe it. I forget 'em as soon as I've learned them, any way."

How much longer he might have pursued this slightly crooked line of thought is uncertain; probably, if he had carried it on all the evening, he would not, by so doing, have become either wiser or better. But the soliloquy came to a sudden end in consequence of the fact that the eye of this ambitious young student happened to fall upon a certain new book which he had not before noticed. Now, James, though he was by no means fond of studying Latin grammar, was exceedingly fond of reading an entertaining story; so the instant that he observed the book he snatched it up eagerly, and began turning over its pages in order to see whether they promised to furnish him any amusement. Something evidently arrested his attention, for there was quiet in the library for nearly an hour afterward, and during that time the boy scarcely raised his head or changed his position. If any one had been looking over his shoulder just then, he might have seen that the story which proved so fascinating was, in its principal parts, something like this:

“During any summer season, between thirty and forty-five years ago, a traveler in Scotland might, perhaps, have observed, in some one of the stone quarries of the country, a poor stone-mason, of rough and unpolished aspect, clad in the coarse garments suited to his calling, his hands soiled from contact with the wet rocks, and his bushy hair giving no token whatever that it covered a brain of more than usual size and power. But even if the traveler had encountered the particular gang of workmen of which this mason was, for the time, a member, it is not at all probable that any thing in his appearance would have attracted the attention of the stranger. Perhaps, however, if his fellow-workmen had been questioned concerning him, they might have said that, when among them, he was habitually silent; that he seemed to take a strange interest in the form and position of the rocks among which he toiled; that while their leisure hours were passed in foolish talk and laughter, he loved to steal off by himself, with a book and his thoughts for company; and that, in a word, he appeared to know a great deal more than one at first sight would be likely to suspect. And if the stars in the sky above could have borne

their witness to the eccentric character of this young man, they would have told how, evening after evening, they had looked down upon him as he sat alone in the hay-loft of some half-covered barrack, and did nothing but think for hours together. He was certainly something more than an ordinary person, this Scotch stone-mason, and yet he had been only the son of a poor sailor, who had died while his child was very young, and had left him to the care of two uncles, one a harness-maker and the other a cartwright. The boy had been sent to school from the time he was five years' old until he was seventeen; but his masters drilled him principally in reading and writing, and succeeded in teaching him very little beside. Out of the school-room he learned more than within it. One of his uncles instructed him in natural history; the other taught him something of the habits and traditions of men; and the reading of all the books which he could obtain, and a habit of observing carefully every thing worth the noticing, added not a little to his stock of knowledge. When he became a stone-cutter, earning his bread by his own labor, he read and studied no less earnestly than before; amid hardships and privations

of various kinds, still persevering in his efforts to know and to be all that he could, and meeting and overcoming the greatest obstacles with a firm and dauntless will. It was no high road to learning that he trod, but a difficult and solitary path, strewn with hinderances and often shaded in darkness; but he saw that at the end were pleasure and honor, and he pressed forward until the end was reached. Now, his name—Hugh Miller—is a household word; wherever the English tongue is spoken, his writings are read and admired; and men of science everywhere revere the memory of 'the great geologist.'

There was something about the story of this Scottish scholar's life which deeply interested James Harris, and he did not lay down the book until the last leaf had been turned and the last page read through; then he leaned his head on his hand and thought. He saw that to one, at least, of his fellow-beings, the acquisition of knowledge had been a very much more difficult thing than he had ever imagined it could be to any one; and he began to wonder whether, after all, he ought not to be glad that it was so easy for him to obtain it; that he had parents who were anxious to have him well educated and in-

telligent, and teachers who took great pains to instruct him, and books, as many as he could read, for the asking. But in the course of a few minutes moralizing became rather dull work; James began to feel a little drowsy; and very shortly he was carried, in a dream, from the comfortable arm-chair in the library to the side of a high and dreary mountain. Above him, pile upon pile of gigantic rocks rose towering to the sky. Thick clouds hid from his sight the valley below, and around him he heard the sound of the clicking of the hammers of a number of stone-masons, with whom he, strange to say, was at work. He seemed to be pounding industriously, but to no purpose, upon a huge stone which lay before him; and though he again and again repeated to himself that he was spending his strength foolishly, yet some invisible power still kept him at his task. Often he attempted to break away: he would be happy anywhere, he thought, if once he could leave that cold, dismal place. But that nameless something kept him tapping, tapping, until days, weeks, months had passed, and he was in despair.

There were men all around him, but he was unable to understand their language, or to hold any

communication with them, and he longed intensely for a sight of the familiar faces of his parents and companions. He would have given any thing to be back again in his pleasant home, or at his own desk in school. And how glad he would have been to see a book once more ; even a grammar lesson would have been delightful compared with that wearisome tapping. He could bear it no longer ; he must escape. He made a last great effort to do so, and—awoke. How relieved he was to find that his misery had been all a dream ; and how quickly he jumped from his chair to pick up the book which he had so angrily cast from him a couple of hours before. It seemed to him now like an old friend ; he was sure that he would never more consider it as a task to be compelled to study it ; much less would he ever complain that his parents obliged him to attend school ; it was really a very pleasant place, and knowledge *was* worth obtaining, since it could make of a poor sailor's son such a man as Hugh Miller. He himself meant to see what it could make of him. He would rise early the very next morning and learn his lessons perfectly ; for he knew now that, if the advantages he then enjoyed should at any time be taken from

him, he would be very sorry that he had not improved them while they were his.

So you see that James changed his mind concerning the importance of study. Perhaps some other boys would do well to follow his example.





XX.

Nellie Septon's Obedience.

“**J**ANE, call me early to-morrow morning, if you please. Our teacher said he wanted us all to be at Sunday-school before it begins; so I will have to get up about five o'clock, I guess. Don't you think so?”

“Not quite so early, my dear,” Jane replied; “but I will try to call you in time.”

“Well,” said Nellie; and closing her eyes, she entered the land of dreams.

She staid there, too, until long after five o'clock the next morning, until the sun had been up a full hour, and its beams were already crowding through the cracks of the blinds, and gilding the snow-white walls of her room. She was aroused by the voice of

her nurse, "Come, Nellie, it is time to get up, if you are going to Sunday-school." Immediately Nellie was wide awake, and, quickly dressing and taking breakfast, was soon on her way, repeating to herself, as she walked, the words of the lesson she was to recite. The sky was clear and beautiful, and overflowing with sunshine; but it was a winter morning nevertheless, and when she reached the school, the hands and feet of the little girl were numb with the cold. But she didn't mind that—not at all—why should she? She was at the place where, more than at any other, she delighted to be. Besides, the minute-hand of the clock over the door had still to pass half around its face before it would point to the hour of nine; and when the sound of the bell on the desk called the children to order, Nellie had had time to become as warm and comfortable as need be. How pleasant it was there! she thought, with so many bright-eyed little girls all around her, and so many bright-eyed little boys on the other side of the room, and a superintendent who looked and was so very kind, at the desk, and all appearing so contented and happy. And then every thing that was said and done was exactly what she liked to hear and

see. But the singing—that was the best of all. They sang for some time hymns old and new—hymns which had been sung by thousands of children all over the world, and hymns just written and published—fresh from the mint.

At length they commenced one which, to judge from the way in which it was shouted out, seemed a favorite with all. The first verse ran thus:

“ Do you know any little barefoot boy,
In a garret or a cellar,
Who shivers with cold and whose garments old
Will scarcely hold together?
Go bring him in; there is room to spare;
Here are food and shelter and pity:
And we'll not shut the door 'gainst one of Christ's poor,
Though you bring every child in the city.”

When they had sung this, there was a pause, and the superintendent said, “ Children, I hope none of you will imagine that you are through with this verse now. You have sung it, indeed; but you ought to do more—you should obey it.” And he went on to tell them that, if they did not already know any such children as this “ little barefoot boy,” they should each of them try to find one, at least,

and bring him to the Sabbath-school; and that, if they did this, they might prevent some little ones from growing up in ignorance and wickedness, and so have this promise fulfilled to themselves, "He that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Nellie listened as attentively as though she had supposed that the words were spoken to herself alone; and, after the school had been dismissed, and she had returned to her pleasant home, she called to mind the remarks of her teacher, and tried to think whether among all her friends there were any so poor and miserable as the child described in the hymn. But she was unable to remember one; for her playmates all lived in comfortable homes, and had kind parents, who gave them food and clothing, and every thing else that they had need of.

But the next day Nellie made an acquaintance.

"Matches! matches! shoe-laces!" called a voice through the streets. It was a queer little voice, that sounded as though it had lost its way in trying to get out of somebody's mouth, and so had come, very much weakened and frightened, through his nose.

Its owner was a boy, apparently about twelve years old.

His pantaloons, which were very ragged and of a scant pattern, scarcely reached to his ankles, leaving entirely uncovered the large, misshapen feet that moved but slowly over the icy pavements. His brown jacket, with one very short sleeve of the same color, and one very long one, taken from somebody's blue over-alls, was too thin to afford much, if any, protection from the cold. His freckled face, naturally round, flat, and smooth, was drawn up into innumerable wrinkles when he uttered his oft-repeated cry of "ma-atches! matches!" and his bushy red hair was surmounted by a cap that would have been small for a child of half his years. Altogether, his appearance was by no means attractive, and as he stopped before Mrs. Septon's window, his evident wretchedness moved her to purchase some of the articles so carefully carried in the long basket on his arm. The lady, rightly guessing that he was hungry, went to procure him some breakfast; so Nellie was left alone with him in the hall. She stood silently eyeing him for some time; but at length a new idea flashed into her mind, and she summoned courage to speak :

"Little boy, do you live in a garret?"

The boy stared, but made no reply; probably he did not know what a garret was.

Nellie persevered. "Little boy, do you live in a cellar?"

"No, I stay nights on the top floor, and days in the streets."

"Are you ever cold?"

"Yes, most always."

"What's your name, little boy?" Nellie would call him little, though she scarcely reached his shoulder.

"Sometimes they call me Nat, and sometimes Bub. I don't know which is right. May be both."

"Well"—Nellie spoke slowly—"I don't know, but I guess you're the little boy we sung about yesterday. Will you go to Sunday-school with me?"

"To where?"

"To Sunday-school."

"Where's that?"

"Oh! it's a real nice place, where we sing, and read the Bible, and hear pretty stories, and learn how to be good."

"Is it warm there?"

"Yes, real."

"Well, I'll go."

So the agreement was made; and, after receiving a good, warm meal from her mother, and repeated injunctions from the girl to "be sure to be there in time," the match-boy went out again into the cold. He was gone, but Nellie did not forget him; and often through the day she paused in the midst of her play as the remembrance of the forlorn-looking child came to her mind.

She was troubled, and with a trouble that was not her own. At last she went to her mother for help. "Mother, I wish I had a new coat for that little boy."

"Do you, my dear? Perhaps he could wear some of your brother's clothes. I will try to alter a suit for him." So Nellie's trouble was taken away, and through the rest of the week she was so happy that the house rang all day long with the sound of her voice, as she sang, over, and over, and over again—

"Do you know any little barefoot boy
In a garret or a cellar?"

At last Sabbath morning came, and with it the

little match-boy, looking colder, and dirtier, and more ragged than ever.

Jane locked herself into her own room with him for a while, and brought him back so changed that Nellie would not have known him. He was really quite good-looking, she thought, as she almost ran with him through the street until they reached the Sunday-school. They met the Superintendent at the door.

"Mr. —, here's a new scholar I brought—the one you told us about, you know."

The "new scholar" looked as though he would like to run away, but the kind words he heard soon reassured him; and at length Nellie was delighted to see an expression of real interest on his face as he heard the lessons and hymns recited and sung. Without doubt every thing seemed very strange to Nat, the poor match-boy; and when his teacher began to tell him about heaven, the "happy land" where he would some time go if he loved to do what was right, he began to wonder whether he were not there already.

Of course it was not hard for Nellie to obtain, after school, the promise that he would "come again."

And he kept his word. Sabbath after Sabbath he was found always in his place, always in time, always with a lesson perfectly learned. And from week to week he altered for the better. Even his voice lost its unnatural tone, and his eyes, which were before wild and staring, began to wear a more intelligent expression. He "changed his business" too, and, with the help of his teacher, found a situation as errand-boy in a respectable store. Now Nellie can scarcely believe that he is the same boy who excited her pity on that cold winter morning, which seems to her to have been long ago. It is true that no one can tell what his future will be; but faithful, honest, and industrious as he now is, learning every week lessons of wisdom from the Book of books, placed under the care of those who love to obey the command, "Feed my lambs," it would be strange if he should grow to be any thing other than a good and useful man. Of Nellie, it can only be said that "she did what she could."





XXI.

“I Will.”

WHEN Fanny Ellerly was a very little girl, only a few months old, she began to show that she had what her nurse called “a mind of her own.” The first evidence of this was found in the fact that it was her habit to utter sundry very unmusical cries whenever any unfortunate mortal endeavored to coax her into dreamland before she considered it the proper time for going thither. Her “signs of resistance” upon these occasions, if they did not always secure her the victory in the conflict that was sure to ensue, were, at least, sufficient to prove that the will of the young lady, who made them was a thing not to be lightly spoken of nor easily subdued. This state of affairs came at

length to be so well understood that, when visitors asked, as they often did, "Is not your babe very good, Mrs. Ellerly?" the reply most frequently given was, "Oh! yes, very—only she likes to have her own way sometimes."

When Fanny grew older and left the nursery for the school-room, it was not long before her teacher discovered that what the little girl had once resolved upon, it was a difficult matter to prevent her from doing. This determination of hers was indeed sometimes a great assistance in her studies; for it enabled her to learn easily and well lessons that the other scholars were satisfied with saying were "so hard that they couldn't understand them." But then, on the other hand, it was often quite as much of a hindrance to her when it happened that, for some unaccountable reason, her perseverance would suddenly change into obstinacy, and she would declare that she could not, should not, and would not do perhaps some very little thing that her teacher had required of her.

So, too, in regard to her schoolmates. Fanny's "will" was very convenient when there was a special favor to be obtained or a hazardous undertaking

to be performed ; for it invariably made her their leader, and usually a triumphant one. But then it was not quite so pleasant when Fanny insisted upon directing all their sports ; telling them just how and what to play, and compelling them always to do just as she wished, without once being willing to yield any thing to them. She would have been highly indignant if they had called her selfish ; she would have freely bestowed upon them her favorite books and the toys she most prized if they had desired them ; but not an iota of her darling will would she have given up, to please even her dearest friend.

At home it was very much the same. Fanny loved her parents, she believed, with all her heart ; she would, indeed, have done any thing for them—provided always that they allowed her to do it at the time she liked best, at the place she chose, and in her own way. Certainly she loved them both most fondly, but not enough to look up with a smile and say, " Well, papa, you know best," when her father denied her any thing she had asked him for, or to leave her book or play with a cheerful face when her mother requested her to watch her little brother awhile, or to do an errand for her.

The truth is, that Fanny loved neither any body nor any thing so much as her own will—the will that, though it was sometimes of service in helping her to overcome difficulties, was more of an injury to her than a benefit, because it made her exceedingly selfish, tyrannical toward her companions, and even occasionally disobedient to her parents. Once it brought her into a trouble which she never afterward forgot, and from the effects of which it took her a long time to recover. "Fanny!" called her father one morning, "come here; I have something to show you." Fanny ran out to the front of the house, and found there, standing by her father's side, a beautiful little Shetland pony. It had a dark chestnut-brown color, a long, shaggy mane and tail, large black eyes, that seemed brimful of gentleness and kindness, and was of just the right height for a little girl to ride it without danger.

"Oh! what a splendid pony!" exclaimed Fanny, running to him and beginning to stroke his side. "You dear, good papa, to get me such a beautiful present. Let me get on him right away, will you?" Her father smiled at her eagerness, but replied that the side-saddle which he had ordered had not yet ar-

rived, and his little girl must wait for her ride until it should come.

"Oh! I don't want any saddle. I can ride without any," said Fanny. But her father thought differently; so after the pony had been admired and caressed, and a dozen different names—none of which were considered half good enough for him—had been discussed, he was led away to the stable. But Fanny was not satisfied. "I don't see why I couldn't have had just one ride. I think pa's real unkind not to let me." These were her first thoughts after her father had given her a "good-by" kiss and hurried off to his business.

Her next thought was, that she might be able to induce her mother to allow her to do as she desired. So to her mother she went.

"Ma, mayn't I just get on the pony's back a minute?" "No, my dear, it would not be safe." "Oh! yes it would, ma. I think you might let me." "Fanny, you heard what I said." "I don't care. I will do it any way." "Fanny, I forbid you to go near the pony until your father comes home: then you may do as he says." Fanny went away pouting, and looking very unamiable. "I don't see what

harm it would be," she said to herself, "and I mean to do it if I can." If she could only have known how she grieved her kind mother, and how much more she grieved her heavenly Friend, of whom it is written that when he was a child upon earth he "was subject unto" his parents, giving us in this as in all other things "an example that we should follow in his steps"—she would even then have said, "I will not be so naughty any longer. I will give up my own inclinations. I will not disobey my mother." But no, she did not think of the sorrow in her mother's heart; she did not heed the voice that says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord;" she was determined to do wickedly. She was very quiet for a while, considering how she might best accomplish her purpose, and Mrs. Ellerly, believing that her child was sorry for the disrespectful words she had spoken, and had resolved to be a better girl, went down-stairs to receive some morning calls. But Fanny's determination was unchanged. "Now is my time," she thought, as the door closed behind her mother; and then, without waiting for her hat or coat, she ran out to the stable.

She found the pony standing quietly in his stall, looking like meekness itself.

"How silly it is to be afraid to have me get on him. Just as if I were a baby! I'll show them how I can ride." So saying, she unfastened the pony and led him out into the yard. "Now, pony, you kneel down and let me get on your back." But the animal did not seem to understand this command; at all events, he declined to obey it. Finding that she could not persuade him to kneel, she led him to a wheelbarrow that was standing near by, and by the help of this she at length contrived, but with great difficulty, to mount upon his back. Now she felt triumphant; she would not have exchanged places with General Grant himself. She was actually on horseback, and all that remained to be done was to ride. "Come, pony, turn around this way!" and she jerked his mane vigorously; but pony did not stir. "Come, pony, turn!" and she jerked still harder. Pony threw up one foot into the air—he evidently had a will as well as his owner. "Pony, go along!" and Fanny slapped his neck with both hands. This was too much of an indignity, and the pony, with a sudden shake, threw his young rider from his

back, and walked leisurely into the stable. As for Fanny, she had touched the wheelbarrow in her fall, and it upset upon her just as she reached the ground. There the coachman found her, half an hour afterward, scarcely able to breathe beneath the heavy weight, and faint from the pain of a broken ankle. He carried her to the house, and laid her upon the bed in her own room, where she had to lie perfectly still for many a long week, and have doctors come around her and hurt her, and suffer a great deal. But one day as she lay there she said: "Mother, I am glad I broke my ankle. I think it was God's way of teaching me that it is wrong for me to say, I will. I see now that I ought to try to do as he wants me to, and I know it is his will that I should mind you and father." Before Fanny was able to walk once more, she learned that it was not only right to obey her parents in all things, but that it really made her happier to sometimes give up her own desires in order to gratify her friends and associates. This discovery made her a better daughter, a better pupil, a better companion, and never again was she heard to say in angry obstinacy, "I will."



XXII.

Nellie Raymond's Work.



ELLIE RAYMOND had taken possession for the time being of her father's easy-chair. It was drawn close to the library-table, upon which was placed a book still open, evidently just laid aside. Seated, or rather reclining, within the hospitable arms of the chair, her head thrown back among the cushions, and her feet extended upon an ottoman, she looked the very personification of laziness. But, to tell the truth, Nellie had never been so hard at work in her life. She had been reading until the lengthening shadows of the short winter day made such a proceeding at least imprudent; reading in her favorite story-book, a very old one, although the cover was still unsullied,

and the brightness of its gilt-edged leaves had not yet grown dim. And she had chosen the story she most loved of the many it contained—how One, “who thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” had condescended to be laid, a helpless babe, in Bethlehem’s manger; how Joseph had been compelled to “take the young child, and Mary, his mother, and flee into Egypt,” in order to avoid the cruelty of a wicked king; and how Jesus “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” And then, passing on a little farther, she had read the wondrous tale of Golgotha and Calvary, the things which were written that, “believing, we might have life,” concerning him who “died, and revived, and rose again,” and ascended to the right hand of God the Father. And now Nellie was trying very hard to think how she could show her love to One whose love was so much greater than hers could ever be.

It was usually easy for her to speak kindly to her brothers and sisters, to obey her father and mother, and to do whatever her teacher might require.

But she wanted to do something that would cost her an effort; something that would seem like real

work for her Master, and she could think of nothing at all. All the boys and girls whom she knew went to Sabbath-school regularly, and lived in comfortable homes, where all their wants were well supplied; and she was not certain that she had ever heard of any blind old woman to whom she might read the Bible, and carry delicacies, and prove herself a ministering angel. So the longer she thought, the more her trouble increased, the more positive she was that there was nothing for her to do.

"What! Nellie, my child, sitting here in the dark?" exclaimed Mr. Raymond, just then coming in, and almost alarmed to find his usually active little daughter sitting perfectly quiet and all alone, instead of being foremost to welcome him when he entered the door of his home. "What is the matter? Are you sick, or tired, or sleepy, or lazy? Come, get a light, and look at the picture I have brought you."

Nellie sprang up to do as she was desired, but was rather surprised to find that the picture contained no cherubs' wings nor baby faces, and neither lake nor mountain, flower nor tree.

In the foreground was a perfectly plain table,

covered over with writing materials, and around it were seated, pen in hand, a number of strangely dressed men, with small eyes, low foreheads, high cheek-bones, and long cues hanging from the backs of their heads. Only one of them looked as though he might have come from some part of the civilized world, and he was dressed in the same outlandish costume as the rest.

Nellie could not imagine why her father had bought such a very uninteresting picture, with nothing pretty about it at all.

"What a queer-looking set of men! Where do they live? What are they doing? Who is that one in the middle? What are those—"

"Wait a minute, my daughter. One question at a time. These men are Chinese. That one in the centre is Robert Morrison, an English missionary. It is only sixty years since he left his home and set sail for China; but he was the first Protestant missionary who went to teach the people of that country the way of salvation. Upon reaching the city of Canton, he found himself in a land where were more than three hundred millions of men, women, and children, living in heathenism and wickedness;

and he, with the exception of one friendly native, was all alone, with no helper but his God. What could he do among so many? He certainly could not preach personally to all those three hundred millions. But one thing it was possible for him to do for them: he would translate the Bible into their language, in order that they might all read for themselves the truths which he had been sent to teach them. So he hired a retired room, dressed himself in the costume of the natives—for it was necessary to be cautious in order to escape persecution—and then went to work. In the picture you see him engaged in translating, with his assistants around him. His undertaking was by no means an easy one; for in Chinese writing eight or ten thousand characters are employed instead of the twenty-six of our alphabet, and all these must be used in their proper place. Dr. Morrison labored at first amid many difficulties, but after a time more help was procured, and in the course of a few years of patient toil his task was accomplished. From that time the Chinese have been able to read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. They have been slow to leave their idols in order to embrace the Christian religion; but

we hope it will not be long before they learn to love the Saviour whom we worship, and to adore the God whom they, as well as we, are bound to serve. After living in China as a missionary for more than twenty-five years, Dr. Morrison died, leaving a name more honorable than those who have conquered whole empires that they might increase their own glory; for he lived in obedience to the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' "

"I wish I could go and teach the heathen, too," said Nellie.

"Perhaps you can some day, if your life is spared; but in the mean time, I know of at least one heathen whom you might instruct, and she lives much nearer than India, or China, or Japan."

"Where is it? I will go and see her right away."

"Well, you will have to go no farther than to the kitchen; for Katy certainly needs to be taught as much as though her skin were dark, and her dress strange, and she lived thousands of miles away. Don't you remember her saying the other day how much she wished that she knew how to read?"

"Yes, father, but it would take a good while to teach her, she is so slow to learn."

"Certainly, Nellie, but you must have patience and perseverance; and, if you really want to do good, you will not be afraid of a little trouble and self-denial."

"Well, I will try," said the little girl; "I will begin to-night."

And Nellie did try and did succeed, though sometimes her patience was almost exhausted, and sometimes it seemed as though Katy could not or would not learn; and often it would have been far pleasanter to have been playing games with her brothers and sisters than to be bending over that tedious spelling-book.

But at length, when Katy was able to stammer through the first chapter of John, and to say, with gladness beaming on her countenance, "I am so much happier, Miss Nellie, since you taught me to read," Nellie felt that her labor had not been in vain. The first and best fruit of the Spirit is love.





XXIII.

What Made the Difference?



IZZIE LORRAINE'S father was what is called a prosperous merchant. His firm was considered one of the safest in the city; his name and credit stood high in the estimation of all who knew him, and his home was one of the most elegant which wealth and good taste combined were able to procure. Altogether, his situation was regarded as most enviable by the less fortunate men around him, excepting, perhaps, by the few wiser than himself who had paused to think upon the question, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Lizzie, his only daughter, was, by both her parents, petted and caressed, humored in all her whims and fancies, continually laden with gifts, and treated

very much as a pretty plaything made to amuse and to be amused, rather than as an immortal being to be trained for the service and glory of God. Of course, it was not strange that all this indulgence had injured the child's temper, and made her, as her mother secretly believed, a very little selfish; yet it was not on this account discontinued.

"Why should we not try to please 'Lizzie whenever it is possible?" Mr. Lorraine would say to his wife. "I do love to see the little thing happy." So when Lizzie's birthday approached, the important day upon which she was to be really seven years old, many were the plans laid for her entertainment.

First, and most important in the arrangements for the celebration of the event, was a party, to which all her schoolmates and companions were to be invited, and at which were to be flowers and music, dancing and feasting. Lizzie was delighted with the prospect before her, with the vision of costly dresses, and brilliantly lighted rooms and a crowd of polite little gentlemen and ladies, bowing and smiling, and trying to behave in all things as they imagined their fathers and mothers would do if placed in similar circumstances.

The long-desired evening came at last, and Lizzie was pleased, as she had expected to be. Yet perhaps her happiness was not quite so perfect as one might have supposed; for, terrible to relate, the discovery had been made, too late to be remedied, that a very insignificant trifle about her own attire was not in the very latest style; and, in the next place, she was almost too fatigued from the excitement of preparation to enjoy the dancing as she was accustomed to do: and then her guests were not all of them thoroughly polite after all; for Minnie Smith said, in a whisper quite loud enough for Lizzie to hear, that she thought Lizzie Lorraine's taste was very poor indeed; and Harry Smith, after inviting her to dance, actually left her when he saw Lucy Gray, his particular friend, standing by the wall without a partner.

But worse than all this was the experience of the next day, when Jane was cross because the little girl did not rise so early as usual; and her father went off to his business without giving her his morning kiss; and her mother declared that "she hoped they would never have a party again, the excitement was so trying to one's nerves;" and Lizzie herself felt

out of humor with every body and every thing—a certain seven-year-old young lady included.

She did not feel like studying, so going to school was not to be thought of. Her mother was too tired to ride out, and it was not likely that any of her friends would call to see her.

Of course, her games and toys were useless if she had no one to share them with her, and she never could bear to practice on the piano.

The list of possible amusements for the day was growing exceedingly small, until at last a bright thought struck Lizzie's mind.

"Come, Jane," said she, "I want to take a walk. Get ready and go with me, will you?"

Jane was pleased with any plan which could relieve her of the duty of finding entertainment for her somewhat troublesome charge, so the walk was agreed upon.

"Where shall we go, Miss Lizzie? To the park, I suppose."

"Oh! no, I'm tired of the sight of that old park. Come down this way, and let us look at the store-windows. I want to see something new."

Jane turned obligingly in the direction indicated

by the little girl, and the two walked on briskly, only pausing now and then to admire the attractions of some gayly decorated window.

Stopping before one more magnificent in its display than the rest, Lizzie noticed near it a small, low stand, covered with shoe-laces, penny songs, and other articles of small value. Behind it was a small object which occasioned in Lizzie's mind some doubt whether it might be a little girl or a very old woman—so pinched were the features with the piercing cold, and so marked was the brow with the traces of care and suffering. Her clothing could not help to resolve the difficulty; for her head was enveloped in a quilted hood, so large that the cape covered her shoulders; around her was a thin, faded shawl, which looked as though it might have come over in the Half-Moon or the Mayflower; and her ragged dress hung about her in scanty folds, and was then gathered tightly around her feet. Lizzie was, indeed, sorely perplexed in what light to regard this pitiful object, until, drawing nearer, she saw the pale lips begin to move, and then heard sung, in a clear, childish voice, the words:

"Jesus loves me. This I know;
For the Bible tells me so."

"Little girl," interrupted Lizzie, "is that one of the songs on those papers?"

The child was evidently too engaged with her own thoughts to notice any thing around her; so she went on singing:

"He will love me when I die,
Take me home to him on high."

Lizzie repeated her question. "All the new songs that's goin', mum, only one cent apiece. I have laces, two pair for three cents. Rattles, apples, whistles, very cheap," was the startled but rather inappropriate reply.

"Miss Lizzie wants to know," said Jane, coming to the help of her charge, "was it one of these songs you were singing?"

"Oh! no," answered the child, her face growing suddenly bright; "it's one I learned in the school yonder, and I sing it most days when I sit here by myself; it makes me feel glad like."

Lizzie wondered how any one so poor as her new acquaintance could ever feel glad about any thing.

"What is your name, little girl?"

"Marguerite; and little sis's name is Emma. I take care of her and me, and a gentleman lets us sleep down cellar; and she goes to the school every day, and Sundays we both go together. And we have such nice times; it's so warm there; and that's where I learned to sing, and I got this book there, I did."

She drew from her pocket a small, worn Testament, and looked upon it with an expression which told, better than words could have done, how she had learned to love it.

"This tells what the song means, you know, and about the place where He lives. It must be beautiful up there."

"Come, Miss Lizzie," said Jane; "what would your ma say to see you talking here to a little beggar? I'll give her some pennies to get her dinner with, and we must go home."

Lizzie turned away with a feeling of regret; she had intended to ask Marguerite the name of the book which could make a poor child appear so much happier than she herself was, with all her friends and many pleasures. Why was it that she should feel

restless and discontented, while a little friendless girl could sit and sing with very gladness in the cold, comfortless street?


Lizzie did not know that it was the knowledge which Marguerite had obtained of "a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother" that caused her to forget the troubles of this world in thinking of the heaven to which he would guide her at last. "The fruit of the Spirit is joy."





XXIV.

A Story with a Meaning.

“ MISERY! thou art to be my only portion! Father of mercy, forgive me if I wish I had never been born! Oh! that I were dead, if death were an annihilation of being; but as it is not, teach me to endure life—to enjoy it I never can.”

Had these words been written by a man who had passed through many years of suffering; who had seen all his hopes destroyed and all his loved ones perish; who was worn by multiplied cares and enfeebled by manifold trials; whose only hope of rest or peace was in the grave—though we could hardly even then think them right—we might still consider them as the natural expressions of a heart sunk in

hopeless despair. But when we are told that they were written by a mere boy—by one who had not yet passed “youth’s sunny season;” who still heard the whispers of hope in his soul; who had laid bright plans for a life of usefulness, if not of happiness, it is difficult to believe that what we read is true. And yet these were words penned during his boyhood by Dr. John Kitto, who became in after-years one of the most noted Bible students whom England has numbered among her men of learning. One can readily imagine that, at the time of writing such lines as these, he must have felt himself in unusual trouble. And well he might; for to be poor, friendless, ill-treated, and withal totally deaf and almost dumb, as he was, is to be in a condition which God in his mercy has called few others to experience. The boy’s whole history was a sad one, but it may teach us a lesson which we need to learn. Until he reached his twelfth year he had been able, like other children, to hear the voices of his friends, the sweet songs of the birds, and all the pleasant sounds with which the air is filled. But at that age his ears were closed, never more on earth to be opened. He lost his hearing by an accident which happened in this way.

It was toward the close of the day. From the morning until then the child had been working with his father, whose trade was that of a mason, and who was engaged at the time upon the roof of a building of more than average height. It was the duty of the boy to ascend again and again the ladder which reached from the ground to the roof, as he carried to his father the materials required for use. Already he had mounted many times; soon his task would be ended, and he would go home to enjoy the evening meal and the rest made sweet by labor. But truly we know not what an hour or a moment may bring forth. Just as his work was almost finished, just as he had gained the highest round of the ladder for nearly the last time, his foot slipped, and he fell a distance of many feet to the pavement below. He was found there lying senseless, was carried home, and for two weeks knew nothing. When he awoke from his long sleep, a strange stillness was around him; he could see the moving lips of those about him, but not a word that they spoke was he able to distinguish—his sense of hearing was destroyed. It was not long before, forgetting, perhaps, the sound of language, and unable to perceive whether he spoke

correctly or not, he lost, in a measure, the power of speech, and could make himself understood only by signs or writing. This sudden affliction was indeed great; but the old saying that "troubles never come singly" was in his case to be verified, and he was called to further sorrow. His grandmother, with whom he had previously lived, dying, left him without a home. His father, a man of dissipated habits, failed to provide for his son, and the deaf-mute was sent to the workhouse. There he was taught the art of making shoes, and was, after a time, apprenticed by the workhouse authorities to a shoemaker. This man proved to be a most cruel master, who struck the boy when he made a wrong stitch, pounded his head with a hammer upon slight provocation, and ill-treated him in many ways. It was during this trying apprenticeship that the boy penned the lines found above, which express a degree of misery almost impossible to be realized by those who, in comfortable homes, enjoy the kindness of the friends who are dear to them, and who possess, in all their perfection, the faculties of which the young shoemaker was deprived. Yet, even in the midst of his griefs, he found companionship and consolation in

reading and study; for of these he was very fond, and all of his leisure moments were devoted to self-improvement. For this boy, whom no one could expect to become any thing more than a tolerable mechanic, just able, perhaps, to earn his daily bread, living and dying in the obscurity in which his lot appeared to be cast, had already determined to make of himself all that he could, and had dreamed of one day writing books which should cause his name to be known and honored.

His extraordinary intelligence was not destined to remain long unnoticed. It attracted the attention of some gentlemen, who procured his release from his apprenticeship and raised a fund to enable him to continue his studies. As his friends supposed that there were few occupations which he could pursue, it was proposed that he should learn the art of printing, which he soon thoroughly mastered. Having acquired it, he was engaged as a printer for a missionary station on the island of Malta, for which place he accordingly sailed.

His work there, though faithfully performed, was unsatisfactory to his employers, who quarreled with him because his spare hours were passed in study,

and very soon dismissed him. Upon his return to England, he was engaged as tutor to the sons of a missionary about leaving for Persia. With them the young man traveled for the space of three years, eagerly seizing the opportunities which were frequently offered of becoming familiar with the places mentioned in the Scriptures.

Returning once more to his native land, Mr. Kitto devoted himself entirely to literature, and in twenty years (from 1833 to 1853) composed twenty-one books, some of which were of great size, and treated of subjects requiring profound study. At length, at the age of fifty, his overtasked brain gave way, and then, when his work was done, God called him to himself. The trials of his youth had their compensation in the universal esteem in which he came to be held in after-life; and though to him they were grievous, for us their recital is full of instruction, since they show us what obstacles may be overcome when one has once determined to improve all the talents which have been committed to him. If a poor deaf-mute could do so much and so well, what should be expected of those whose faculties are unimpaired, and whose advantages are better by far

than his? All may not have the abilities which he possessed—all may not become authors, or make their names famous among men; but all may do something to honor the God who made them, and whom it is their duty to serve. Our talents may be many or few, our gifts of one sort or another; but we all have at least one talent, one gift which may be made of use to our fellow-men. It may be no more than the power to speak kindly, to “weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that do rejoice,” or to give a cup of cold water in the Master’s name; but whatever can be done, let us do, and our reward shall be sure. But we need to remember that we are responsible not only for what we can do, but also for what we may become able to do, and for this reason we should carefully cultivate all the powers by means of which it is possible for us to benefit others.

If learning to play upon an instrument, or to sing songs of gladness, will make the home circle pleasanter and happier, and we can learn, then we should practice music—we have a talent to be improved. If by diligent study we can become better fitted to impart instruction to those more ignorant than our-


selves, we should make study our business—it is a part of our duty. It may be one gift or it may be another that we are called to employ—all have not the same; but of one thing we may be certain—our work upon earth will not be rightly done unless we make of ourselves, our time, our opportunities, *all that we can.*





XXV.

A Conflict and a Victory.

“ND when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any.” What was it that so suddenly brought these words to the memory of Marion Graves? The “still silence” of the evening hour had come, the duties, the pleasures, the little trials of the day were all over; and now, as the young girl knelt to ask of the great Father forgiveness for her offenses, and to commit herself to his watchful keeping, there came a sad consciousness that she was in a state unfit for prayer, a knowledge, together with the remembrance of the command, that she was not ready to obey it, and rising, she left the prayer unsaid.

For how could she approach the mercy-seat while

she knew that sin ruled her spirit, that she was unwilling to forgive the trespasses of one who had trespassed against her? Would the Lord hear her while she regarded iniquity in her heart? Yet it was very difficult to obey the precept; for Marion, although she hoped that her name was among those which are written in the Book of Life, was not "already perfect;" it had always been a hard matter for her to forget an injury; and to-day she had been attacked on a point upon which she was naturally sensitive.

"Oh! so here comes the new saint. I suppose she's going to be a pattern of excellence. There's no need of our having high tempers after this, girls; for we won't have any one to teach us how to show them."

This was the salutation which had greeted her ear as she entered the school-room that morning, and it was not one which it was easy to bear in silence. To be ridiculed upon any subject was, to Marion, particularly annoying; but to be laughed at for her newly made resolutions; to listen to this allusion to a temper which, as her schoolmates well knew, was always easily excited; and to receive this treatment from one who had hitherto been her friend, was too

much for her fortitude. "Alice Carlisle!" she began, and then, suddenly recollecting herself, she turned, with a flushed cheek and glistening eye, and moved quickly to her desk. Anger was her besetting sin, and it overcame now, overcame her when most she had need to resist it. Why could she not be composed and try to feel kindly toward Alice? But it seemed impossible, and all day long there was a struggle in her heart between the good and the evil; she knew that it was right to "forgive and forget," but for her it was unnatural, and so for a time the evil gained the mastery. Her lessons were, as usual, well recited, her home duties faithfully performed; but overshadowing them all with a dark cloud of gloom, making pleasures troubles and light tasks irksome, was the knowledge that somewhere in the heart which she had lately hoped had been renewed and purified was a feeling not only of dislike, but almost of resentment toward her thoughtless school-mate. Night came at length, bringing to others repose of body and of mind, but not to Marion. Could she rest with that weight of unrepented guilt upon her? Could she sleep without sending heavenward the penitential prayer? But to repent and to pray

were both impossible while she still heard and disobeyed this one command, "Forgive." *This* Marion knew, but yet it was hard to forget the scornful look, the taunting tone, the unkind words—to love with the old affection the friend who had so suddenly become a foe. It was, indeed, a dark hour for Marion Graves; for there can be none more sad than one in which the soul, at war with its better inclinations, rebels against the commandments of its God. But presently there came to her the remembrance of a darker hour than that—of a conflict far more terrible, when the sun was veiled in blackness, the graves were opened, and the rocks were rent—when earth and sky united to proclaim the sorrowful but wondrous tale of Olivet and Calvary. And as Marion called to mind the anguish that had once been borne for her—remembered, too, the prayer of compassion that had arisen even from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"—she could resist no longer. "Her sins, which were many," had been pardoned, and surely she could overlook *one* provocation, *one* trifling injury. She was ready now to forgive not only "until seven times, but until seventy times seven."

The following morning Marion was among the first who gathered around the school-room fire, chatting pleasantly as they awaited the ringing of the bell which should summon them to quiet and study. Alice did not arrive till later, and when she came it was with a clouded brow and troubled countenance. "Girls," said she, approaching the knot by the stove, "have any of you solved this problem? I worked at it all last evening; but my ideas about it now are like 'confusion worse confounded.'" "I can explain it to you, Alice," replied Marion kindly. "Oh! thank you, Miss Perfection, I most respectfully decline your aid; I was addressing myself to the others."

Marion turned away grieved, but this time not angry. She had determined to "overcome evil with good," and would not despair at the first disappointment; she would watch for some other opportunity to prove the sincerity of her forgiveness. She had not to watch in vain. Not once, or twice, but often there came times when she could and did show that her love for her friend was undiminished. And at length she reaped the reward of her efforts. Gradually the iron bars of prejudice were broken down, and instead of them were renewed the old cords of

affection which had once bound the two hearts together.

Several years passed rapidly away, and at the season when the earth in its new raiment of green was telling to all that the winter was over and gone, and the time of the singing of birds had come, two girls might be seen walking together in a retired street in the town of ——. Unlike as they were in personal appearance, each face was radiant with the same joy, each beamed with the light of the same hope. Of that hope, of that joy, Marion and Alice were conversing. Were not these words, spoken by the former scoffer who had learned to love the things which she once despised, a sufficient recompense to her friend for the struggle and the victory of a few short years before? "Marion, do you know what first made me believe that there was reality in religion? It was the fact that it enabled you, whose disposition was naturally resentful, to forgive so entirely all my unkindness toward you. You first showed me the beauty of a life conformed to the precepts of the Gospel, and you taught me to see and to endeavor myself to prove the truth of the saying of the wise man, 'Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'"





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